







"The moon like a rick on
fire
was rising over the dale"

THE COMPLETE WORKS
OF
ALFRED
✓
LORD TENNYSON
"
POET LAUREATE

TWO VOLUMES IN ONE. FAMILY EDITION. FULLY ILLUSTRATED WITH
NEW ENGRAVINGS AFTER DESIGNS BY

CHARLES HOWARD JOHNSON



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TO THE QUEEN.

*Revered, beloved—O you that hold
A nobler office upon earth
Than arms, or power of brain, or
birth
Could give the warrior kings of old,*

*Victoria,—since your Royal grace
To one of less desert allows
This laurel greener from the brows
Of him that utter'd nothing base ;*

*And should your greatness, and the
care
That yokes with empire, yield you
time
To make demand of modern rhyme
If aught of ancient worth be there ;*

*Then—while a sweeter music wakes,
And thro' wild March the throistle
calls,
Where all about your palace-walls
The sun-lit almond-blossom shakes—*

*Take, Madam, this poor book of song ;
For tho' the faults were thick as dust
In vacant chambers, I could trust
Your kindness. May you rule us long,*

*And leave us rulers of your blood
As noble till the latest day !
May children of our children say,
' She wrought her people lasting good ;*

*' Her court was pure ; her life serene ;
God gave her peace ; her land re-
posed ;
A thousand claims to reverence
closed
In her as Mother, Wife, and Queen ;*

*' And statesmen at her council met
Who knew the seasons when to take
Occasion by the hand, and make
The bounds of freedom wider yet*

*' By shaping some august decree,
Which kept her throne unshaken still,
Broad-based upon her people's will,
And compass'd by the inviolate sea.'*

March, 1851.

JUVENILIA.

CLARIBEL.

A MELODY.

I.

WHERE Claribel low-lieth
The breezes pause and die,
Letting the rose-leaves fall :
But the solemn oak-tree sigheth,
Thick-leaved, ambrosial,
With an ancient melody
Of an inward agony,
Where Claribel low-lieth.

II.

At eve the beetle boometh
Athwart the thicket lone :
At noon the wild bee hummeth
About the moss'd headstone :
At midnight the moon cometh,
And looketh down alone.
Her song the lintwhite swelleth,
The clear-voiced mavis dwelleth,
The callow throistle lisbeth,
The slumbrous wave outwelleth,
The babbling runnel crispeth,
The hollow grot replieth
Where Claribel low-lieth.

NOTHING WILL DIE.

WHEN will the stream be aweary of
flowing
Under my eye ?
When will the wind be aweary of
blowing
Over the sky ?

When will the clouds be aweary of
fleeting ?
When will the heart be aweary of
beating ?
And nature die ?
Never, oh ! never, nothing will die ;
The stream flows,
The wind blows,
The cloud fleets,
The heart beats,
Nothing will die.

Nothing will die ;
All things will change
Thro' eternity.
'Tis the world's winter ;
Autumn and summer
Are gone long ago ;
Earth is dry to the centre,
But spring, a new comer,
A spring rich and strange,
Shall make the winds blow
Round and round,
Thro' and thro',
Here and there,
Till the air
And the ground
Shall be fill'd with life anew.

The world was never made ;
It will change, but it will not fade.
So let the wind range ;
For even and morn
Ever will be
Thro' eternity.
Nothing was born ;
Nothing will die ;
All things will change.



"THE SOLEMN OAK-TREE SIGHETH."—Page 2.



ALL THINGS WILL DIE.

CLEARLY the black river chimes in its flowing

Under my eye;
Warmly and broadly the south winds are blowing

Over the sky.
One after another the white clouds are fleeting;

Every heart this May morning in joyance is beating

Full merrily;
Yet all things must die.
The stream will cease to flow;
The wind will cease to blow;
The clouds will cease to fleet;
The heart will cease to beat;

For all things must die.
All things must die.
Spring will come never more.

Oh! vanity!
Death waits at the door.
See! our friends are all forsaking
The wine and the merrymaking.
We are call'd—we must go.
Laid low, very low,
In the dark we must lie.
The merry glees are still;
The voice of the bird
Shall no more be heard,
Nor the wind on the hill.

Oh! misery!
Hark! death is calling
While I speak to ye,
The jaw is falling,
The red cheek paling,
The strong limbs failing;
Ice with the warm blood mixing;
The eyeballs fixing.
Nine times goes the passing bell:
Ye merry souls, farewell.

The old earth
Had a birth.
As all men know,
Long ago.
And the old earth must die.
So let the warm winds range,
And the blue wave beat the shore;
For even and morn
Ye will never see
Thro' eternity.

All things were born.
Ye will come never more,
For all things must die.

LEONINE ELEGIACS.

LOW-FLOWING breezes are roaming
the broad valley dimm'd in the gloaming:

Thro' the black-stemm'd pines only
the far river shines.

Creeping thro' blossomy rushes and
bowers of rose-blowing bushes,
Down by the poplar tall rivulets
babble and fall.

Barketh the shepherd-dog cheerly;
the grasshopper carolleth clearly;
Deeply the wood-dove coos; shrilly
the owlet halloos;

Winds creep; dew falls chilly: in her
first sleep earth breathes stilly:
Over the pools in the burn water-gnats
murmur and mourn.

Sadly the far kine loweth: the glim-
mering water outfloweth:
Twin peaks shadow'd with pine slope
to the dark hyaline.

Low-throned Hesper is stayed between
the two peaks; but the Naiad
Throbbing in mild unrest holds him
beneath in her breast.

The ancient poetess singeth, that Hes-
perus all things bringeth,
Smoothing the wearied mind: bring
me my love, Rosalind.

Thou comest morning or even; she
cometh not morning or even.
False-eyed Hesper, unkind, where is
my sweet Rosalind?

SUPPOSED CONFESSIONS

OF A SECOND-RATE SENSITIVE MIND.

O GOD! my God! have mercy now.
I faint, I fall. Men say that Thou
Didst die for me, for such as *me*,
Patient of ill, and death, and scorn,
And that my sin was as a thorn

Among the thorns that girt Thy brow,
Wounding Thy soul.—That even now,
In this extremest misery
Of ignorance, I should require
A sign! and if a bolt of fire
Would rive the slumbrous summer
noon

While I do pray to Thee alone,
Think my belief would stronger grow!
Is not my human pride brought low?
The boastings of my spirit still?
The joy I had in my freewill
All cold, and dead, and corpse-like
grown?

And what is left to me, but Thou,
And faith in Thee? Men pass me by;
Christians with happy countenances—
And children all seem full of Thee!
And women smile with saint-like
glances

Like Thine own mother's when she
bow'd

Above Thee, on that happy morn
When angels spake to men aloud,
And Thou and peace to earth were
born.

Goodwill to me as well as all—
I one of them: my brothers they:
Brothers in Christ—a world of peace
And confidence, day after day;
And trust and hope till things should
cease,
And then one Heaven receive us all.

How sweet to have a common faith!
To hold a common scorn of death!
And at a burial to hear
The creaking cords which wound and
eat

Into my human heart, when'er
Earth goes to earth, with grief, not
fear,
With hopeful grief, were passing
sweet!

Thrice happy state again to be
The trustful infant on the knee!
Who lets his rosy fingers play
About his mother's neck, and knows
Nothing beyond his mother's eyes.
They comfort him by night and day;
They light his little life away;
He hath no thought of coming woes;

He hath no care of life or death;
Scarce outward signs of joy arise,
Because the Spirit of happiness
And perfect rest so inward is;
And loveth so his innocent heart,
Her temple and her place of birth,
Where she would ever wish to dwell,
Life of the fountain there, beneath
Its salient springs, and far apart,
Hating to wander out on earth,
Or breathe into the hollow air,
Whose chillness would make visible
Her subtil, warm, and golden breath,
Which mixing with the infant's blood,
Fulfills him with beatitude.
Oh! sure it is a special care
Of God, to fortify from doubt,
To arm in proof, and guard about
With triple-mailed trust, and clear
Delight, the infant's dawning year.

Would that my gloomed fancy were
As thine, my mother, when with brows
Propt on thy knees, my hands upheld
In thine, I listen'd to thy vows,
For me outpour'd in holiest prayer—
For me unworthy!—and beheld
Thy mild deep eyes upraised, that knew
The beauty and repose of faith,
And the clear spirit shining thro'.
Oh! wherefore do we grow awry
From roots which strike so deep? why
dare

Paths in the desert? Could not I
Bow myself down, where thou hast knelt,
To the earth—until the ice would melt
Here, and I feel as thou hast felt?
What Devil had the heart to scathe
Flowers thou hadst rear'd—to brush
the dew

From thine own lily, when thy grave
Was deep, my mother, in the clay?
Myself? Is it thus? Myself? Had I
So little love for thee? But why
Prevail'd not thy pure prayers? Why

pray
To one who heeds not, who can save
But will not? Great in faith, and strong
Against the grief of circumstance
Wert thou, and yet unheard. What if
Thou pleadest still, and seest me drive
Thro' utter dark a full-sail'd skiff,
Unpiloted i' the echoing dance

Of reboant whirlwinds, stooping low
Unto the death, not sunk! I know
At matins and at evensong,
That thou, if thou wert yet alive,
In deep and daily prayers would'st
strive

To reconcile me with thy God.
Albeit, my hope is gray, and cold
At heart, thou wouldest murmur still—
'Bring this lamb back into Thy fold,
My Lord, if so it be Thy will.'

Would'st tell me I must brook the rod
And chastisement of human pride;
That pride, the sin of devils, stood
Betwixt me and the light of God!
That hitherto I had defied
And had rejected God—that grace
Would drop from his o'er-brimming
love,

As manna on my wilderness,
If I would pray—that God would
move

And strike the hard, hard rock, and
thence,

Sweet in their utmost bitterness,
Would issue tears of penitence
Which would keep green hope's life.

Alas!

I think that pride hath now no place
Nor sojourn in me. I am void,
Dark, formless, utterly destroyed.

Why not believe then? Why not yet
Anchor thy frailty there, where man
Hath moor'd and rested? Ask the
sea

At midnight, when the crisp slope
waves

After a tempest, rib and fret
The broad-imbas'd beach, why he
Slumbers not like a mountain tarn?
Wherefore his ridges are not curls
And ripples of an inland mere?
Wherefore he moaneth thus, nor can
Draw down into his vexed pools
All that blue heaven which hucs and
paves

The other? I am too forlorn,
Too shaken: my own weakness fools
My judgment, and my spirit whirls,
Moved from beneath with doubt and
fear.

'Yet,' said I, in my morn of youth,
The unsunn'd freshness of my
strength,

When I went forth in quest of truth,
'It is man's privilege to doubt,
If so be that from doubt at length,
Truth may stand forth unmoved of
change,

An image with profulgent brows,
And perfect limbs, as from the storm
Of running fires and fluid range
Of lawless airs, at last stood out
This excellence and solid form
Of constant beauty. For the Ox
Feeds in the herb, and sleeps, or fills
The horned valleys all about,
And hollows of the fringed hills
In summer heats, with placid lows
Unfearing, till his own blood flows
About his hoof. And in the flocks
The lamb rejoiceth in the year,
And raceth freely with his fere,
And answers to his mother's calls
From the flower'd furröw. In a time,
Of which he wots not, run short pains
Thro' his warm heart; and then, from
whence

He knows not, on his light there falls
A shadow; and his native siope,
Where he was wont to leap and climb,
Floats from his sick and filmed eyes,
And something in the darkness draws
His forehead earthward, and he dies.
Shall man live thus, in joy and hope
As a young lamb, who cannot dream,
Living, but that he shall live on?
Shall we not look into the laws
Of life and death, and things that
seem,

And things that be, and analyse
Our double nature, and compare
All creeds till we have found the one,
If one there be?' Ay me! I fear
All may not doubt, but everywhere
Some must clasp idols. Yet, my God,
Whom call I Idol? Let Thy dove
Shadow me over, and my sins
Be unremember'd, and Thy love
Enlighten me. Oh teach me yet
Somewhat before the heavy clod
Weights on me, and the busy fret
Of that sharp-headed worm begins
In the gross blackness underneath.

O weary life ! O weary death !
O spirit and heart made desolate !
O damned vacillating state !

THE KRAKEN.

BELOW the thunders of the upper
deep ;
Far, far beneath in the abysmal sea,
His ancient, dreamless, uninvaded
sleep
The Kraken sleepeth : faintest sun-
lights flee
About his shadowy sides : above him
swell
Huge sponges of millennial growth and
height ;
And far away into the sickly light,
From many a wondrous grot and secret
cell
Unnumber'd and enormous polypi
Winnow with giant arms the slumber-
ing green.
There hath he lain for ages and will lie
Battening upon huge seaworms in his
sleep,
Until the latter fire shall heat the
deep ;
Then once by man and angels to be
seen,
In roaring he shall rise and on the
surface die.

SONG.

THE winds, as at their hour of birth,
Leaning upon the ridged sea,
Breathed low around the rolling earth
With mellow preludes, ' We are
free.'

The streams through many a lilled
row
Down-carolling to the crisped sea,
Low-tinkled with a bell-like flow
Atween the blossoms, ' We are free.'

LILIAN.

I.

AIRY, fairy Lilian,
Flitting, fairy Lilian,
When I ask her if she love me,
Claps her tiny hands above me,
Laughing all she can ;
She'll not tell me if she love me,
Cruel little Lilian.

II.

When my passion seeks
Pleasance in love-sighs,
She, looking thro' and thro' me
Thoroughly to undo me,
Smiling, never speaks :
So innocent-arch, so cunning-simple,
From beneath her gathered wimple
Glancing with black-beaded eyes,
Till the lightning laughs dimple
The baby-roses in her cheeks ;
Then away she flies.

III.

Prythee weep, May Lilian !
Gaiety without eclipse
Wearieth me, May Lilian :
Thro' my very heart it thrilleth
When from crimson-threaded lips
Silver-treble laughter trilleth :
Prythee weep, May Lilian.

IV.

Praying all I can,
If prayers will not hush thee,
Airy Lilian,
Like a rose-leaf I will crush thee,
Fairy Lilian.

ISABEL.

I.

EYES not down-dropt nor over-bright,
but fed
With the clear-pointed flame of
chastity,
Clear, without heat, undying, tended
by

Pure vostal thoughts in the trans-
lucant fane
Of her still spirit; locks not wide-dis-
spread,
Madonna-wise on either side her
head;
Sweet lips whereon perpetually
did reign
The summer calm of golden charity,
Were fixed shadows of thy fixed mood,
Revered Isabel, the crown and
head,
The stately flower of female fortitude,
Of perfect wifehood and pure
lowlyhead.

II.

The intuitive decision of a bright
And thorough-edged intellect to
part
Error from crime; a prudence to
withhold;
The laws of marriage character'd
in gold
Upon the blanch'd tablets of her
heart;
A love still burning upward, giving
light
To read those laws; an accent very low
In blandishment, but a most silver flow
Of subtle-paced counsel in dis-
tress,
Right to the heart and brain, tho'
undescried,
Winning its way with extreme
gentleness
Thro' all the outworks of suspicious
pride;
A courage to endure and to obey;
A hate of gossip parlance, and of
sway,
Crown'd Isabel, thro' all her placid life,
The queen of marriage, a most per-
fect wife.

III.

The mellow'd reflex of a winter moon;
A clear stream flowing with a muddy
one,
Till in its onward current it absorbs
With swifter movement and in
purer light

The vexed eddies of its way-
ward brother:
A leaning and upbearing parasite,
Clothing the stem, which else had
fallen quite
With cluster'd flower-bells and am-
brosial orbs
Of rich fruit-bunches leaning on
each other—
Shadow forth thee:—the world
hath not another
(Tho' all her fairest forms are types
of thee,
And thou of God in thy great charity)
Of such a finish'd chasten'd purity.

MARIANA.

'Mariana in the moated grange.'
Measure for Measure.

WITH blackest moss the flower-plots
Were thickly crusted, one and all:
The rusted nails fell from the knots
That held the pear to the gable-wall.
The broken sheds look'd sad and
strange:
Unlifted was the clinking latch;
Weeded and worn the ancient
thatch
Upon the lonely moated grange.
She only said, 'My life is dreary,
He cometh not,' she said;
She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!'
Her tears fell with the dews at even;
Her tears fell ere the dews were
dried;
She could not look on the sweet
heaven,
Either at morn or eventide.
After the flitting of the bats,
When thickest dark did trance the
sky,
She drew her casement-curtain by,
And glanced athwart the glooming
flats.
She only said, 'The night is dreary,
He cometh not,' she said;
She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!'

Upon the middle of the night,
Waking she heard the night-fowl
crow :

The cock sung out an hour ere light :
From the dark fen the oxen's low
Came to her : without hope of change,
In sleep she seem'd to walk forlorn,
Till cold winds woke the gray-eyed
morn

About the lonely moated grange.
She only said, 'The day is dreary,
He cometh not,' she said ;
She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead !'

About a stone-cast from the wall
A sluice with blacken'd waters slept,
And o'er it many, round and small,
The cluster'd marish-mosses crept.
Hard by a poplar shook alway,
All silver-green with gnarled bark :
For leagues no other tree did mark
The level waste, the rounding gray.
She only said, 'My life is dreary,
He cometh not,' she said ;
She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead !'

And ever when the moon was low,
And the shrill winds were up and
away,
In the white curtain, to and fro,
She saw the gusty shadow sway.
But when the moon was very low,
And wild winds bound within their
cell,
The shadow of the poplar fell
Upon her bed, across her brow.
She only said, 'The night is
dreary,
He cometh not,' she said ;
She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead !'

All day within the dreamy house,
The doors upon their hinges
creak'd ;
The blue fly sung in the pane ; the
mouse
Behind the mouldering wainscot
shriek'd,
Or from the crevice peer'd about.

Old faces glimmer'd thro' the doors,
Old footsteps trod the upper floors,
Old voices called her from without.
She only said, 'My life is dreary,
He cometh not,' she said ;
She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead !'

The sparrow's chirrup on the roof,
The slow clock ticking, and the
sound

Which to the wooing wind aloof
The poplar made, did all confound
Her sense ; but most she loathed the
hour

When the thick-moted sunbeam lay
Athwart the chambers, and the day
Was sloping toward his western
bower.

Then, said she, 'I am very dreary,
He will not come,' she said ;
She wept, 'I am aweary, aweary,
Oh God, that I were dead !'

TO —.

I.

CLEAR-HEADED friend, whose joyful
scorn,
Edged with sharp laughter, cuts
atwain
The knots that tangle human
creeds,
The wounding cords that bind and
strain
The heart until it bleeds,
Ray-fringed eyelids of the morn
Roof not a glance so keen as
thine :
If aught of prophecy be mine,
Thou wilt not live in vain.

II.

Low-cowering shall the Sophist sit ;
Falsehood shall bare her plaited
brow ;
Fair-fronted Truth shall droop not
now
With shrilling shafts of subtle wit.
Nor martyr flames, nor trenchant
swords

Can do away that ancient lie;
A gentler death shall Falsehood die,
Shot thro' and thro' with cunning
words.

III.

Weak Truth a-leaning on her crutch,
Wan, wasted Truth in her utmost
need,

Thy kingly intellect shall feed,
Until she be an athlete bold,
And weary with a finger's touch
Those writhed limbs of lightning
speed;

Like that strange angel which of old,
Until the breaking of the light,
Wrestled with wandering Israel,
Past Yabbok brook the livelong
night,

And heaven's mazed signs stood still
In the dim tract of Penuel.

MADELINE.

I.

THOU art not, steep'd in golden lan-
guors,

No tranced summer calm is thine,
Ever varying Madeline.

Thro' light and shadow thou dost
range,
Sudden glances, sweet and strange,
Delicious spites and darling angers,
And airy forms of flitting change.

II.

Smiling, frowning, evermore,
Thou art perfect in love-lore.
Revealings deep and clear are thine
Of wealthy smiles: but who may
know

Whether smile or frown be fleet?—
Whether smile or frown be sweeter,
Who may know?

Frowns perfect-sweet along the brow
Light-glooming over eyes divine,
Like little clouds sun-fringed, are
thine,

Ever varying Madeline.

Thy smile and frown are not aloof
From one another,
Each to each is dearest brother;
Hues of the silken sheeny woof
Momently shot into each other.
All the mystery is thine;
Smiling, frowning, evermore,
Thou art perfect in love-lore,
Ever varying Madeline.

III.

A subtle, sudden flame,
By veering passion fann'd,
About thee breaks and dances;
When I would kiss thy hand,
The flush of anger'd shame
O'erflows thy calmer glances,
And o'er black brows drops down
A sudden-curved frown:
But when I turn away,
Thou, willing me to stay,

Wooest not, nor vainly wranglest;
But, looking fixedly the while,
All my bounding heart entanglest
In a golden-netted smile;
Then in madness and in bliss,
If my lips should dare to kiss
Thy taper fingers amorously,
Again thou blushest angrily;
And o'er black brows drops down
A sudden-curved frown.

SONG—THE OWL.

I.

WHEN cats run home and light is
come,
And dew is cold upon the ground,
And the far-off stream is dumb,
And the whirring sail goes round,
And the whirring sail goes round;
Alone and warming his five wits,
The white owl in the belfry sits.

II.

When merry milkmaids click the
latch,
And rarely smells the new-mown
hay,
And the cock hath sung beneath the
thatch

Twice or thrice his roundelay,
Twice or thrice his roundelay;
Alone and warming his five wits,
The white owl in the belfry sits.

SECOND SONG.

TO THE SAME.

I.

THY tuwhits are lull'd, I wot,
Thy tuwhoos of yesternight,
Which upon the dark afloat,
So took echo with delight,
So took echo with delight,
That her voice untuneful grown,
Wears all day a fainter tone.

II.

I would mock thy chant anew;
But I cannot minick it;
Not a whit of thy tuwhoo,
Thee to woo to thy tuwhit,
Thee to woo to thy tuwhit,
With a lengthen'd loud halloo,
Tuwhoo, tuwhit, tuwhit, tu-
whoo-o-o.

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE
ARABIAN NIGHTS.

WHEN the breeze of a joyful dawn
blew free
In the silken sail of infancy,
The tide of time flow'd back with me,
The forward-flowing tide of time;
And many a sheeny summer-morn,
Adown the Tigris I was borne,
By Bagdat's shrines of fretted gold,
High-walled gardens green and old;
True Mussulman was I and sworn,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Anight my shallop, rustling thro'
The low and bloomed foliage, drove
The fragrant, glistening deeps, and
clove
The citron-shadows in the blue:
By garden porches on the brim,

The costly doors flung open wide,
Gold glittering thro' lamplight dim,
And broider'd sofas on each side:
In sooth it was a goodly time,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Often, where clear-stem'd platans
guard
The outlet, did I turn away
The boat-head down a broad canal
From the main river sluiced, where all
The sloping of the moon-lit sward
Was damask-work, and deep inlay
Of braided blooms unmown, which
crept
Adown to where the water slept.
A goodly place, a goodly time,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

A motion from the river won
Ridged the smooth level, bearing on
My shallop thro' the star-strown calm,
Until another night in night
I enter'd, from the clearer light,
Imbower'd vaults of pillar'd palm,
Imprisoning sweets, which, as they
clomb
Heavenward, were stay'd beneath the
dome
Of hollow boughs.—A goodly time,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Still onward; and the clear canal
Is rounded to as clear a lake.
From the green rivage many a fall
Of diamond rillels musical,
Thro' little crystal arches low
Down from the central fountain's flow
Fall'n silver-chiming, seemed to shake
The sparkling flints beneath the prow.
A goodly place, a goodly time,

For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.
Above thro' many a bowery turn
A walk with vary-color'd shells
Wander'd engrain'd. On either side
All round about the fragrant marge
From fluted vase, and brazen urn
In order, eastern flowers large,

Some dropping low their crimson
bells
Half-closed, and others studded wide
With disks and tiars, fed the time
With odor in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Far off, and where the lemon grove
In closest coverture upsprung,
The living airs of middle night
Died round the bulbul as he sung;
Not he: but something which pos-
sess'd
The darkness of the world, delight,
Life, anguish, death, immortal love,
Ceasing not, mingled, unpress'd,
Apart from place, withholding time,
But flattering the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Black the garden-bowers and grots
Slumber'd: the solemn palms were
ranged
Above, unwood'd of summer wind:
A sudden splendor from behind
Flush'd all the leaves with rich gold-
green,
And, flowing rapidly between
Their interspaces, counterchanged
The level lake with diamond-plots
Of dark and bright. A lovely time,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Dark-blue the deep sphere overhead,
Distinct with vivid stars inlaid,
Grew darker from that under-flame:
So, leaping lightly from the boat,
With silver anchor left afloat,
In marvel whence that glory came
Upon me, as in sleep I sank
In cool soft turf upon the bank,
Entranced with that place and time,
So worthy of the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Thence thro' the garden I was
drawn—
A realm of pleasance, many a mound,
And many a shadow-chequer'd lawn
Full of the city's stilly sound,
And deep myrrh-thickets blowing
round

The stately cedar, tamarisks,
Thick rosaries of scented thorn,
Tall orient shrubs, and obelisks
Graven with emblems of the time,
In honor of the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

With dazed vision unawares
From the long alley's latticed shade
Emerged, I came upon the great
Pavilion of the Caliph.
Right to the carved cedarn doors,
Flung inward over spangled floors,
Broad-based flights of marble stairs
Ran up with golden balustrade,
After the fashion of the time,
And humor of the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

The fourscore windows all alight
As with the quintessence of flame,
A million tapers flaring bright
From twisted silvers look'd to shame
The hollow-vaulted domes, and stream'd
Upon the mooned domes aloof
In inmost Bagdat, till there seem'd
Hundreds of crescents on the roof
Of night new-risen, that marvellous
time
To celebrate the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Then stole I up, and trancedly
Gazed on the Persian girl alone,
Serene with argent-lidded eyes
Amorous, and lashes like to rays
Of darkness, and a brow of pearl
Tressed with redolent ebony,
In many a dark delicious curl,
Flowing beneath her rose-hued zone;
The sweetest lady of the time,
Well worthy of the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Six columns, three on either side,
Pure silver, underpropt a rich
Throne of the massive ore, from
which
Down-droop'd, in many a floating
fold,
Engarlanded and diaper'd
With inwrought flowers, a cloth of
gold.

Thereon, his deep eye laughter-stirr'd
 With merriment of kingly pride,
 Sole star of all that place and time,
 I saw him—in his golden prime,
 THE GOOD HAROUN ALRASCHID.

ODE TO MEMORY.

ADDRESSED TO —.

I.

THOU who stealest fire,
 From the fountains of the past,
 To glorify the present; oh, haste,
 Visit my low desire!
 Strengthen me, enlighten me!
 I faint in this obscurity,
 Thou dewy dawn of memory.

II.

Come not as thou camest of late,
 Flinging the gloom of yesternight
 On the white day; but robed in soft-
 en'd light
 Of orient state.
 Whilome thou camest with the morn-
 ing mist,
 Even as a maid, whose stately brow
 The dew-impearled winds of dawn
 have kiss'd,
 When, she, as thou,
 Stays on her floating locks the lovely
 freight
 Of overflowing blooms, and earliest
 shoots
 Of orient green, giving safe pledge of
 fruits,
 Which in wintertide shall star
 The black earth with brilliance rare.

III.

Whilome thou camest with the morn-
 ing mist,
 And with the evening cloud,
 Showering thy gleaned wealth into
 my open breast
 (Those peerless flowers which in the
 rudest wind
 Never grow sere,

When rooted in the garden of the
 mind,
 Because they are the earliest of the
 year).

Nor was the night thy shroud.
 In sweet dreams softer than unbroken
 rest
 Thou leddest by the hand thine infant
 Hope.
 The eddying of her garments caught
 from thee
 The light of thy great presence; and
 the cope

Of the half-attain'd futurity,
 Tho' deep not fathomless,
 Was cloven with the million stars
 which tremble
 O'er the deep mind of dauntless in-
 fancy.

Small thought was there of life's dis-
 tress;

For sure she deem'd no mist of earth
 could dull

Those spirit-thrilling eyes so keen
 and beautiful:

Sure she was nigher to heaven's
 spheres,
 Listening the lordly music flowing
 from

The illimitable years.

O strengthen me, enlighten me!

I faint in this obscurity,

Thou dewy dawn of memory.

IV.

Come forth, I charge thee, arise,
 Thou of the many tongues, the myriad
 eyes!

Thou comest not with shows of flaunt-
 ing vines

Unto mine inner eye,
 Divinest Memory!

Thou wert not nursed by the water-
 fall

Which ever sounds and shines

A pillar of white light upon the
 wall

Of purple cliffs, aloof descried:

Come from the woods that belt the
 gray hill-side,

The seven elms, the poplars four
 That stand beside my father's door,



"I WOULD THAT I WERE DEAD!"—Page 7.





"THE DARK DESERTED HOUSE,"—Page 17.



And chiefly from the brook that loves
To purr o'er matted cress and ribbed
sand,

Or dimple in the dark of rushy coves,
Drawing into his narrow earthen urn,
In every elbow and turn,

The filter'd tribute of the rough wood-
land,

O! hither lead thy feet!

Pour round mine ears the livelong
bleat

Of the thick-fleeced sheep from wat-
tled folds,

Upon the ridged wolds,
When the first matin-song hath wak-
en'd loud

Over the dark dewy earth forlorn,
What time the amber morn

Forth gushes from beneath a low-
hung cloud.

v.

Large dowries doth the raptur'd eye
To the young spirit present

When first she is wed;

And like a bride of old

In triumph led,

With music and sweet showers

Of festal flowers,

Unto the dwelling she must sway.
Well hast thou done, great artist
Memory,

In setting round thy first experiment
With royal frame-work of
wrought gold;

Needs must thou dearly love thy first
essay,

And foremost in thy various gallery
Place it, where sweetest sunlight
falls

Upon the storied walls;

For the discovery
And newness of thine art so pleased
thee,

That all which thou hast drawn of
fairest

Or boldest since, but lightly weighs
With thee unto the love thou bearest
The first-born of thy genius. Artist-
like,

Ever retiring thou dost gaze
On the prime labor of thine early days:

No matter what the sketch might be;
Whether the high field on the bushless
Pike,

Or even a sand-built ridge
Of heaped hills that mound the sea,
Overblown with murmurs harsh,
Or even a lowly cottage whence we see
Stretch'd wide and wild the waste
enormous marsh,

Where from the frequent bridge,
Like emblems of infinity,
The trenched waters run from sky to
sky;

Or a garden bower'd close
With plaited alleys of the trailing
rose,

Long alleys falling down to twilight
grots,

Or opening upon level plots
Of crowned lilies, standing near
Purple-spiked lavender:

Whither in after life retired

From brawling storms,

From weary wind,

With youthful fancy re-inspired,

We may hold converse with all
forms

Of the many-sided mind,
And those whom passion hath not
blinded,

Subtle-thoughted, myriad-minded.

My friend, with you to live alone,
Were how much better than to own
A crown, a sceptre, and a throne!

O strengthen me, enlighten me!

I faint in this obscurity,

Thou dewy dawn of memory.

SONG.

I.

A SPIRIT haunts the year's last hours
Dwelling amid these yellowing bowers:
To himself he talks;

For at eventide, listening earnestly,
At his work you may hear him sob
and sigh

In the walks;

Earthward he boweth the heavy stalks
Of the mouldering flowers:
Heavily hangs the broad sun-flower
Over its grave i' the earth so chilly;
Heavily hangs the hollyhock,
Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.

II.

The air is damp, and hush'd, and close,
As a sick man's room when he taketh repose
An hour before death;
My very heart faints and my whole soul grieves
At the moist, rich smell of the rotting leaves,
And the breath
Of the fading edges of hox beneath,
And the year's last rose.
Heavily hangs the broad sun-flower
Over its grave i' the earth so chilly;
Heavily hangs the hollyhock,
Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.

A CHARACTER.

With a half-glance upon the sky
At night he said, 'The wanderings
Of this most intricate Universe
Teach me the nothingness of things
Yet could not all creation pierce
Beyond the bottom of his eye.

He spake of beauty: that the dull
Saw no divinity in grass,
Life in dead stones, or spirit in air;
Then looking as 'twere in a glass,
He smooth'd his chin and sleek'd his hair,
And said the earth was beautiful.

He spake of virtue: not the gods
More purely, when they wish to charm
Pallas and Juno sitting by:

And with a sweeping of the arm,
And a lack-lustre dead-blue eye,
Devolved his rounded periods.

Most delicately hour by hour
He canvass'd human mysteries,
And trod on silk, as if the winds
Blew his own praises in his eyes,
And stood aloof from other minds
In impotence of fancied power.

With lips depress'd as he were meek,
Himself unto himself he sold:
Upon himself himself did feed:
Quiet, dispassionate and cold,
And other than his form of creed,
With chisell'd features clear and sleek.

THE POET.

THE poet in a golden clime was born,
With golden stars above;
Dower'd with the hate of hate, the scorn of scorn,
The love of love.

He saw thro' life and death, thro' good and ill,
He saw thro' his own soul.
The marvel of the everlasting will,
An open scroll,

Before him lay: with echoing feet he threaded
The secretest walks of fame:
The viewless arrows of his thoughts were headed
And wing'd with flame,

Like Indian reeds blown from his silver tongue,
And of so fierce a flight,
From Calpe unto Caucasus they sung,
Filling with light

And vagrant melodies the winds which bore
Them earthward till they lit;
Then, like the arrow-seeds of the field flower,
The fruitful wit

Cleaving, took root, and springing
forth anew
Where'er they fell, behold,
Like to the mother plant in semblance,
grew
A flower all gold,

And bravely furnish'd all abroad to
fling
The winged shafts of truth,
To throng with stately blooms the
breathing spring
Of Hope and Youth.

So many minds did gird their orbs
with beams,
Tho' one did fling the fire.
Heaven flow'd upon the soul in many
dreams
Of high desire.

Thus truth was multiplied on truth,
the world
Like one great garden show'd,
And thro' the wreaths of floating dark
upcurl'd,
Rare sunrise flow'd.

And Freedom rear'd in that august
sunrise
Her beautiful bold brow,
When rites and forms before his burn-
ing eyes
Melted like snow.

There was no blood upon her maiden
robes
Sunn'd by those orient skies;
But round about the circles of the
globes
Of her keen eyes

And in her raiment's hem was traced
in flame
WISDOM, a name to shake
All evil-dreams of power—a sacred
name.
And when she spake,

Her words did gather thunder as they
ran,
And as the lightning to the thun-
der

Which follows it, riving the spirit of
man,
Making earth wonder,

So was their meaning to her words.
No sword
Of wrath her right arm whirl'd,
But one poor poet's scroll, and with
his word
She shook the world.

THE POET'S MIND.

I.

VEX not thou the poet's mind
With thy shallow wit:
Vex not thou the poet's mind;
For thou canst not fathom it.
Clear and bright it should be ever,
Flowing like a crystal river;
Bright as light, and clear as wind.

II.

Dark-brow'd sophist, come not near;
All the place is holy ground;
Hollow smile and frozen sneer
Come not here.
Holy water will I pour
Into every spicy flower
Of the laurel-shrubs that hedge it
around.
The flowers would faint at your cruel
cheer.
In your eye there is death,
There is frost in your breath
Which would blight the plants.
Where you stand you cannot hear
From the groves within
The wild-bird's din.
In the heart of the garden the merry
bird chants.
It would fall to the ground if you came
in.
In the middle leaps a fountain
Like sheet lightning,
Ever brightening
With a low melodious thunder;
All day and all night it is ever drawn
From the brain of the purple moun-
tain

Which stands in the distance yonder :
 It springs on a level of bowery lawn,
 And the mountain draws it from
 Heaven above,
 And it sings a song of undying love ;
 And yet, tho' its voice be so clear and
 full,
 You never would hear it ; your ears
 are so dull ;
 So keep where you are : you are foul
 with sin ;
 It would shrink to the earth if you
 came in.

THE SEA-FAIRIES.

Slow sail'd the weary mariners and
 saw,
 Betwixt the green brink and the run-
 ning foam,
 Sweet faces, rounded arms, and
 bosoms prest
 To little harps of gold ; and while
 they mused
 Whispering to each other half in fear,
 Shrill music reach'd them on the mid-
 dle sea.

Whither away, whither away, whither
 away ? fly no more.

Whither away from the high green
 field, and the happy blossoming
 shore ?

Day and night to the billow the foun-
 tain calls :

Down shower the gambolling water-
 falls

From wandering over the lea :
 Out of the live-green heart of the dells
 They freshen the silvery-crimson
 shells,

And thick with white bells the clover-
 hill swells

High over the full-toned sea ;
 O hither, come hither and furl your
 sails,

Come hither to me and to me :
 Hither, come hither and frolic and
 play ;

Here it is only the mew that wails ;
 We will sing to you all the day :
 Mariner, mariner, furl your sails,
 For here are the blissful downs and
 dales,

And merrily, merrily carol the gales,
 And the spangle dances in bright and
 bay,

And the rainbow forms and flies on
 the land

Over the islands free ;

And the rainbow lives in the curve of
 the sand ;

Hither, come hither and see ;

And the rainbow hangs on the poising
 wave,

And sweet is the color of cove and
 cave,

And sweet shall your welcome be :

O hither, come hither, and be our
 lords,

For merry brides are we :

We will kiss sweet kisses, and speak
 sweet words :

O listen, listen, your eyes shall glisten

With pleasure and love and jubilee :

O listen, listen, your eyes shall glisten

When the sharp clear twang of the
 golden chords

Runs up the ridged sea.

Who can light on as happy a shore

All the world o'er, all the world o'er ?

Whither away ? listen and stay : mari-
 ner, mariner, fly no more.

THE DESERTED HOUSE.

I.

LIFE and Thought have gone away

Side by side,

Leaving door and windows wide :

Careless tenants they !

II.

All within is dark as night :

In the windows is no light ;

And no murmur at the door,

So frequent on its hinge before.

III.

Close the door, the shutters close,
Or thro' the windows we shall see
The nakedness and vacancy
Of the dark deserted house.

IV.

Come away : no more of mirth
Is here or merry-making sound.
The house was builded of the earth,
And shall fall again to ground.

V.

Come away : for Life and Thought
Here no longer dwell ;
But in a city glorious—
A great and distant city—have bought
A mansion incorruptible.
Would they could have stayed with
us !

THE DYING SWAN.

I.

THE plain was grassy, wild and bare,
Wide, wild, and open to the air,
Which had built up everywhere
An under-roof of doleful gray.
With an inner voice the river ran,
Adown it floated a dying swan,
And loudly did lament.
It was the middle of the day.
Ever the weary wind went on,
And took the reed-tops as it went.

II.

'Some blue peaks in the distance rose,
And white against the cold-white sky,
Shone out their crowning snows.
One willow over the river wept,
And shook the wave as the wind did
sigh ;
Above in the wind was the swallow,
Chasing itself at its own wild
will,
And far thro' the marish green
and still

The tangled water-courses slept,
Shot over with purple, and green, and
yellow.

III.

The wild swan's death-hymn took the
soul
Of that waste place with joy
Hidden in sorrow : at first to the ear
The warble was low, and full and
clear ;
And floating about the under-sky,
Prevailing in weakness, the coronach
stole
Sometimes afar, and sometimes anear ;
But anon her awful jubilant voice,
With a music strange and manifold,
Flow'd forth on a carol free and bold ;
As when a mighty people rejoice
With shawms, and with cymbals, and
harps of gold,
And the tumult of their acclaim is
roll'd
Thro' the open gates of the city afar.
To the shepherd who watcheth the
evening star.
And the creeping mosses and clamber-
ing weeds,
And the willow-branches hoar and
dank,
And the wavy swell of the souging
reeds,
And the wave-worn horns of the
echoing bank,
And the silvery marish-flowers that
throng
The desolate creeks and pools among,
Were flooded over with eddying song.

A DIRGE.

I.

Now is done thy long day's work ;
Fold thy palms across thy breast,
Fold thine arms, turn to thy rest.
Let them rave.
Shadows of the silver birk
Sweep the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

II.

Thee nor carketh care nor slander;
Nothing but the small cold worm
Fretteth thine enshrouded form.

Let them rave.

Light and shadow ever wander
O'er the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

III.

Thou wilt not turn upon thy bed;
Chanteth not the brooding bee
Sweeter tones than calumny?

Let them rave.

Thou wilt never raise thine head
From the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

IV.

Crocodiles wept tears for thee;
The woodbine and eglare
Drip sweeter dews than traitor's tear.

Let them rave.

Rain makes music in the tree
O'er the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

V.

Round thee blow, self-pleached deep,
Bramble roses, faint and pale,
And long purples of the dale.

Let them rave.

These in every shower creep
Thro' the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

VI.

The gold-eyed kingcups fine,
The frail bluebell peereth over
Rare broidry of the purple clover.

Let them rave.

Kings have no such couch as thine,
As the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

VII.

Wild words wander here and there:
God's great gift of speech abused
Makes thy memory confused:

But let them rave.

The balm-cricket carols clear
In the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

LOVE AND DEATH.

WHAT time the mighty moon was
gathering light

Love paced the thymy plots of Paradise,

And all about him roll'd his lustrous eyes;

When, turning round a cassia, full in view,

Death, walking all alone beneath a yew,

And talking to himself, first met his sight:

'You must begone,' said Death,
'these walks are mine.'

Love wept and spread his sheeny vans for flight;

Yet ere he parted said, 'This hour is thine:

Thou art the shadow of life, and as the tree

Stands in the sun and shadows all beneath,

So in the light of great eternity
Life eminent creates the shade of death;

The shadow passeth when the tree shall fall,

But I shall reign for ever over all.'

THE BALLAD OF ORIANA.

MY heart is wasted with my woe,
Oriana.

There is no rest for me below,
Oriana.

When the long dun wolds are ribb'd
with snow,

And loud the Norland whirlwinds blow,
Oriana,

Alone I wander to and fro,
Oriana.

The Ballad of Oriana.

19

Ere the light on dark was growing,
Oriana,
At midnight the cock was crowing,
Oriana :
Winds were blowing, waters flowing,
We heard the steeds to battle going,
Oriana ;
Aloud the hollow bugle blowing,
Oriana.

In the yew-wood black as night,
Oriana,
Ere I rode into the fight,
Oriana,
While blissful tears blinded my sight
By star-shine and by moonlight,
Oriana,
I to thee my troth did plight,
Oriana.

She stood upon the castle wall,
Oriana :
She watch'd my crest among them all,
Oriana :
She saw me fight, she heard me call,
When forth there stept a foeman tall,
Oriana,
Atween me and the castle wall,
Oriana.

The bitter arrow went aside,
Oriana :
The false, false arrow went aside,
Oriana :
The damned arrow glanced aside,
And pierced thy heart, my love, my
bride,
Oriana !
Thy heart, my life, my love, my bride,
Oriana !

Oh ! narrow, narrow was the space,
Oriana.
Loud, loud rung out the bugle's brays,
Oriana.
Oh ! deathful stabs were dealt apace,
The battle deepen'd in its place,
Oriana ;
But I was down upon my face,
Oriana.

They should have stabb'd me where I
lay,
Oriana !

How could I rise and come away,
Oriana ?
How could I look upon the day ?
They should have stabb'd me where I
lay,
Oriana
They should have trod me into clay,
Oriana.

O breaking heart that will not break,
Oriana !
O pale, pale face so sweet and meek,
Oriana !
Thou smilest, but thou dost not speak,
And then the tears run down my
cheek,
Oriana :
What wantest thou ? whom dost thou
seek,
Oriana ?

I cry aloud : none hear my cries,
Oriana.
Thou comest between me and the skies,
Oriana.
I feel the tears of blood arise
Up from my heart unto my eyes,
Oriana.
Within thy heart my arrow lies,
Oriana.

O cursed hand ! O cursed blow !
Oriana !
O happy thou that liest low,
Oriana !
All night the silence seems to flow
Beside me in my utter woe,
Oriana.
A weary, weary way I go,
Oriana.

When Norland winds pipe down the
sea,
Oriana,
I walk, I dare not think of thee,
Oriana.
Thou liest beneath the greenwood
tree,
I dare not die and come to thee,
Oriana.
I hear the roaring of the sea,
Oriana.

CIRCUMSTANCE.

Two children in two neighbor villages
Playing mad pranks along the healthy
leas ;

Two strangers meeting at a festival ;
Two lovers whispering by an orchard
wall ;

Two lives bound fast in one with
golden ease ;

Two graves grass-green beside a gray
church-tower,

Wash'd with still rains and daisy blos-
somed ;

Two children in one hamlet born and
bred ;

So runs the round of life from hour to
hour.

THE MERMAN.

I.

WHO would be
A merman bold,
Sitting alone,
Singing alone
Under the sea,
With a crown of gold,
On a throne ?

II.

I would be a merman bold,
I would sit and sing the whole of the
day ;

I would fill the sea-halls with a voice
of power ;

But at night I would roam abroad and
play

With the mermaids in and out of the
rocks,

Dressing their hair with the white sea-
flower ;

And holding them back by their flow-
ing locks

I would kiss them often under the sea,
And kiss them again till they kiss'd
me

Laughingly, laughingly ;
And then we would wander away,
away

To the pale-green sea-groves straight
and high,
Chasing each other merrily.

III.

There would be neither moon nor star ;
But the wave would make music above
us afar—

Low thunder and light in the magic
night—

Neither moon nor star.

We would call aloud in the dreamy
dells,

Call to each other and whoop and cry
All night, merrily, merrily ;

They would pelt me with starry span-
gles and shells,

Laughing and clapping their hands
between,

All night, merrily, merrily :

But I would throw to them back in
mine

Turkis and agate and almondine :

Then leaping out upon them unseen

I would kiss them often under the sea,
And kiss them again till they kiss'd

me

Laughingly, laughingly.

Oh ! what a happy life were mine

Under the hollow-hung ocean green !

Soft are the moss-beds under the sea ;

We would live merrily, merrily.

THE MERMAID.

I.

WHO would be
A mermaid fair,
Singing alone,
Combing her hair
Under the sea,
In a golden curl
With a comb of pearl,
On a throne ?

II.

I would be a mermaid fair ;
I would sing to myself the whole of
the day ;

With a comb of pearl I would comb
my hair;
And still as I comb'd I would sing
and say,
'Who is it loves me? who loves not
me?'
I would comb my hair till my ringlets
would fall
Low adown, low adown,
From under my starry sea-bud crown
Low adown and around,
And I should look like a fountain of
gold
Springing alone
With a shrill inner sound,
Over the throne
In the midst of the hall;
Till that great sea-snake under the sea
From his coiled sleeps in the central
deeps
Would slowly trail himself sevenfold
Round the hall where I sate, and look
in at the gate
With his large calm eyes for the love
of me.
And all the mermen under the sea
Would feel their immortality
Die in their hearts for the love of me.

III.

But at night I would wander away,
away,
I would fling on each side my low-
flowing locks,
And lightly vault from the throne and
play
With the mermen in and out of the
rocks;
We would run to and fro, and hide
and seek,
On the broad sea-wolds in the crim-
son shells,
Whose silvery spikes are nighest
the sea.
But if any came near I would call, and
shriek,
And adown the steep like a wave I
would leap
From the diamond-ledges that jut
from the dells;
For I would not be kiss'd by all who
would list,

Of the bold merry mermen under the
sea;
They would sue me, and woo me, and
flatter me,
In the purple twilights under the sea;
But the king of them all would carry
me,
Woo me, and win me, and marry me,
In the branching jaspers under the sea;
Then all the dry pied things that be
In the hueless mosses under the sea
Would curl round my silver feet
silently,
All looking up for the love of me.
And if I should carol aloud, from aloft
All things that are forked, and horned,
and soft
Would lean out from the hollow sphere
of the sea,
All looking down for the love of me.

ADELINE.

I.

MYSTERY of mysteries,
Faintly smiling Adeline,
Scarce of earth nor all divine,
Nor unhappy, nor at rest,
But beyond expression fair
With thy floating flaxen hair;
Thy rose-lips and full blue eyes
Take the heart from out my
breast.
Wherefore those dim looks of thine,
Shadowy, dreaming Adeline?

II.

Whence that aery bloom of thine,
Like a lily which the sun
Looks thro' in his sad decline,
And a rose-bush leans upon,
Thou that faintly smilest still,
As a Naiad in a well,
Looking at the set of day,
Or a phantom two hours old
Of a maiden past away,
Ere the placid lips be cold?
Wherefore those faint smiles of
thine,
Spiritual Adeline?

III.

What hope or fear or joy is thine ?
 Who talketh with thee, Adeline ?
 For sure thou art not all alone.
 Do beating hearts of salient
 springs
 Keep measure with thine own ?
 Hast thou heard the butterflies
 What they say betwixt their
 wings ?
 Or in stillest evenings
 With what voice the violet woos
 To his heart the silver dews ?
 Or when little airs arise,
 How the merry bluebell rings
 To the mosses underneath ?
 Hast thou look'd upon the
 breath
 Of the lilies at sunrise ?
 Wherefore that faint smile of thine,
 Shadowy, dreaming Adeline ?

IV.

Some honey-converse feeds thy mind,
 Some spirit of a crimson rose
 In love with thee forgets to close
 His curtains, wasting odorous sighs
 All night long on darkness blind.
 What aileth thee ? whom waitest thou
 With thy soften'd, shadow'd brow,
 And those dew-lit eyes of thine,
 Thou faint smiler, Adeline ?

V.

Lovest thou the doleful wind
 When thou gazest at the skies ?
 Doth the low-tongued Orient
 Wander from the side of the
 morn,
 Dripping with Sabæan spice
 On thy pillow, lowly bent
 With melodious airs lovelorn,
 Breathing Light against thy face,
 While his locks a-drooping twined
 Round thy neck in subtle ring
 Make a carcanet of rays,
 And ye talk together still,
 In the language wherewith Spring
 Letters cowlips on the hill ?
 Hence that look and smile of thine,
 Spiritual Adeline.

MARGARET.

I.

O SWEET pale Margaret,
 O rare pale Margaret,
 What lit your eyes with tearful power,
 Like moonlight on a falling shower ?
 Who lent you, love, your mortal
 dower
 Of pensive thought and aspect
 pale,
 Your melancholy sweet and frail
 As perfume of the cuckoo-flower ?
 From the westward-winding flood,
 From the evening-lighted wood,
 From all things outward you have
 won
 A tearful grace, as tho' you stood
 Between the rainbow and the sun.
 The very smile before you speak,
 That dimples your transparent
 cheek,
 Encircles all the heart, and feedeth
 The senses with a still delight
 Of dainty sorrow without sound,
 Like the tender amber round,
 Which the moon about her spread-
 eth,
 Moving thro' a fleecy night.

II.

You love, remaining peacefully,
 To hear the murmur of the strife,
 But enter not the toil of life.
 Your spirit is the calmed sea,
 Laid by the tumult of the fight.
 You are the evening star, always
 Remaining betwixt dark and
 bright :
 Lull'd echoes of laborious day
 Come to you, gleams of mellow
 light
 Float by you on the verge of night.

III.

What can it matter, Margaret,
 What songs below the waning
 stars
 The lion-heart, Plantagenet,
 Sang looking thro' his prison
 bars ?

Exquisite Margaret, who can
tell
The last wild thought of Chatelet,
Just ere the falling axe did part
The burning brain from the true
heart,
Even in her sight he loved so
well?

IV.

A fairy shield your Genius made
And gave you on your natal day.
Your sorrow, only sorrow's shade,
Keeps real sorrow far away.
You move not in such solitudes,
You are not less divine,
But more human in your moods,
Than your twin-sister, Adeline.
Your hair is darker, and your eyes
Touch'd with a somewhat darker
hue,
And less ærially blue,
But ever trembling thro' the dew
Of dainty-woeful sympathies.

V.

O sweet pale Margaret,
O rare pale Margaret,
Come down, come down, and hear me
speak :
Tie up the ringlets on your cheek :
The sun is just about to set,
The arching limes are tall and shady,
And faint, rainy lights are seen,
Moving in the leavy beech.
Rise from the feast of sorrow, lady,
Where all day long you sit
between
Joy and woe, and whi-per each.
Or only look across the lawn,
Look out below your bower-eaves,
Look down, and let your blue eyes
dawn
Upon me thro' the jasmine-leaves.

ROSALIND.

I.

My Rosalind, my Rosalind,
My frolic falcon, with bright eyes,

Whose free delight, from any height
of rapid flight,
Stoops at all game that wing the skies.
My Rosalind, my Rosalind,
My bright-eyed, wild-eyed falcon,
whither,
Careless both of wind and weather,
Whither fly ye, what game spy ye,
Up or down the streaming wind?

II.

The quick lark's closest-caroll'd
strains,
The shadow rushing up the sea,
The lightning flash atween the rains,
The sunlight driving down the lea,
The leaping stream, the very wind,
That will not stay, upon his way,
To stoop the crowslip to the plains,
Is not so clear and bold and free
As you, my falcon Rosalind.
You care not for another's pains,
Because you are the soul of joy,
Bright metal all without alloy.
Life shoots and glances thro' your
veins,
And flashes off a thousand ways,
Thro' lips and eyes in subtle rays.
Your hawk-eyes are keen and bright,
Keen with triumph, watching still
To pierce me thro' with pointed light;
But oftentimes they flash and glitter
Like sunshine on a dancing rill,
And your words are seeming-bitter,
Sharp and few, but seeming-bitter
From excess of swift delight.

III.

Come down, come home, my Rosalind,
My gay young hawk, my Rosalind :
Too long you keep the upper skies ;
Too long you roam and wheel at will ;
But we must hood your random eyes,
That care not whom they kill,
And your cheek, whose brilliant hue
Is so sparkling-fresh to view,
Some red heath-flower in the dew,
Touch'd with sunrise. We must bind
And keep you fast, my Rosalind,
Fast, fast, my wild-eyed Rosalind,
And clip your wings, and make you
love :

When we have lured you from above,
And that delight of frolic flight, by
 day or night,
From North to South,
We'll bind you fast in silken cords,
And kiss away the bitter words
From off your rosy mouth.

ELEÄNORE.

I.

Thy dark eyes open'd not,
Nor first reveal'd themselves to
 English air,
For there is nothing here,
Which, from the outward to the
 inward brought,
Moulded thy baby thought.
Far off from human neighborhood,
Thou wert born, on a summer
 morn,
A mile beneath the cedar-wood.
Thy bounteous forehead was not
 fann'd
With breezes from our oaken
 glades,
But thou wert nursed in some delicious
 land
Of lavish lights, and floating
 shades:
And flattering thy childish thought
The oriental fairy brought,
At the moment of thy birth,
From old well-heads of haunted rills,
And the hearts of purple hills,
And shadow'd enves on a sunny
 shore,
The choicest wealth of all the
 earth,
Jewel or shell, or starry ore,
To deck thy cradle, Eleänore.

II.

Or the yellow-banded bees,
Thro' half-open lattices
Coming in the scented breeze.
Fed thee, a child, lying alone,
With whitest honey in fairy gar-
 dens cull'd—
A glorious child, dreaming alone,

In silk-soft folds, upon yielding
 down,
With the hum of swarming bees
Into dreamful slumber lull'd.

III.

Who may minister to thee?
Summer herself should minister
To thee, with fruitage golden-
 rinded
On golden salvers, or it may be,
Youngest Autumn, in a bower
Grape-thicken'd from the light, and
 blinded
With many a deep-hued bell-like
 flower
Of fragrant trailers, when the air
Sleepeth over all the heaven,
And the crag that fronts the
 Even,
All along the shadowing shore,
Crimsons over an inland mere,
Eleänore!

IV.

How may full-sail'd verse express,
How may measured words adore
The full-flowing harmony
Of thy swan-like stateliness,
 Eleänore?
The luxuriant symmetry
Of thy floating gracefulness,
 Eleänore?
Every turn and glance of thine,
Every lineament divine,
 Eleänore,
And the steady sunset glow,
That stays upon thee? For
in thee
Is nothing sudden, nothing sin-
 gle;
Like two streams of incense free
From one censer in one shrine,
Thought and motion mingle,
Mingle ever. Motions flow
To one another, even as thou'
They were modulated so
To an unheard melody,
Which lives about thee, and a sweep
Of richest pauses, evermore
Drawn from each other mellow-deep;
Who may express thee, Eleänore?

V.

I stand before thee, Eleänore ;
 I see thy beauty gradually unfold,
 Daily and hourly, more and more.
 I muse, as in a trance, the while
 Slowly, as from a cloud of gold,
 Comes out thy deep ambrosial smile,
 I muse, as in a trance, whence'er
 The languors of thy love-deep
 eyes
 Float on to me. I would I were
 So tranced, so rapt in ecstasies,
 To stand apart, and to adore,
 Gazing on thee for evermore,
 Serene, imperial Eleänore !

VI.

Sometimes, with most intensity
 Gazing, I seem to see
 Thought folded over thought, smiling
 asleep,
 Slowly awaken'd, grow so full and deep
 In thy large eyes, that, overpower'd
 quite,
 I cannot veil, or droop my sight,
 But am as nothing in its light :
 As tho' a star, in inmost heaven set,
 Ev'n while we gaze on it,
 Should slowly round his orb, and
 slowly grow
 To a full face, there like a sun re-
 main
 Fix'd—then as slowly fade again,
 And draw itself to what it was
 before ;
 So full, so deep, so slow,
 Thought seems to come and go
 In thy large eyes, imperial Eleä-
 nore.

VII.

As thunder-clouds that, hung on high,
 Roof'd the world with doubt and
 fear,
 Floating thro' an evening atmosphere,
 Grow golden all about the sky ;
 In thee all passion becomes passion-
 less,
 Touch'd by thy spirit's mellowness,
 Losing his fire and active might
 In a silent meditation,

Falling into a still delight,
 And luxury of contemplation :
 As waves that up a quiet cove
 Rolling slide, and lying still
 Shadow forth the banks at
 will :
 Or sometimes they swell and move,
 Pressing up against the land,
 With motions of the outer sea :
 And the self-same influence
 Controlleth all the soul and sense
 Of Passion gazing upon thee.
 His bow-string slacken'd, languid
 Love,
 Leaning his cheek upon his hand,
 Droops both his wings, regarding
 thee,
 And so would languish evermore,
 Serene, imperial Eleänore.

VIII.

But when I see thee roam, with tresses
 unconfined,
 While the amorous, odorous wind
 Breathes low between the sunset and
 the moon ;
 Or, in a shadowy saloon,
 On silken cushions half reclined ;
 I watch thy grace ; and in its
 place
 My heart a charmed slumber
 keeps,
 While I muse upon thy face ;
 And a languid fire creeps
 Thro' my veins to all my frame,
 Dissolvingly and slowly : soon
 From thy rose-red lips my name
 Floweth : and then, as in a swoon,
 With dinning sound my ears are
 rife,
 My tremulous tongue faltereth,
 I lose my color, I lose my breath,
 I drink the cup of a costly death,
 Brimm'd with delirious draughts of
 warmest life.
 I die with my delight, before
 I hear what I would hear from
 thee ;
 Yet tell my name again to me
 I *would* be dying evermore,
 So dying ever, Eleänore.

I.

My life is full of weary days,
 But good things have not kept aloof,
 Nor wander'd into other ways:
 I have not lack'd thy mild reproof,
 Nor golden largess of thy praise.

And now shake hands across the
 brink
 Of that deep grave to which I go:
 Shake hands once more: I cannot
 sink
 So far—far down, but I shall know
 Thy voice, and answer from below.

II.

When in the darkness over me
 The four-handed mole shall scrape,
 Plant thou no dusky cypress-tree,
 Nor wreath thy cap with doleful
 crape,
 But pledge me in the flowing grape.

And when the sappy field and wood
 Grow green beneath the showery
 gray,
 And rugged barks begin to bud,
 And thro' damp holts new-flush'd
 with may,
 Ring sudden scratches of the jay,

Then let wise Nature work her will,
 And on my clay her darnel grow;
 Come only, when the days are still,
 And at my headstone whisper low,
 And tell me if the woodbines blow.

EARLY SONNETS.

I.

TO ———.

As when with downcast eyes we muse
 and brood,
 And ebb into a former life, or seem
 To lapse far back in some confused
 dream
 To states of mystical similitude;
 If one but speaks or hems or stirs his
 chair,

Ever the wonder waxeth more and
 more,
 So that we say, 'All this hath been
 before,
 All this hath been, I know not when
 or where.'
 So, friend, when first I look'd upon
 your face,
 Our thought gave answer each to
 each, so true—
 Opposed mirrors each reflecting
 each—
 That tho' I knew not in what time or
 place,
 Methought that I had often met with
 you,
 And either lived in either's heart and
 speech.

TO J. M. K.

MY hope and heart is with thee—thou
 wilt be
 A latter Luther, and a soldier-priest
 To scare church-harpies from the mas-
 ter's feast;
 Our dusted velvets have much need of
 thee:
 Thou art no sabbath-drawler of old
 saws,
 Distill'd from some worm-canker'd
 homily;
 But spur'd at heart with fieriest
 energy
 To embattail and to wall about thy
 cause
 With iron-worded proof, hating to
 hark
 The humming of the drowsy pulpit-
 drone
 Half God's good sabbath, while the
 worn-out clerk
 Brow-beats his desk below. Thou
 from a throne
 Mounted in heaven wilt shoot into the
 dark
 Arrows of lightnings. I will stand
 and mark.

III.

MINE be the strength of spirit, full
 and free,



"MY LIFE IS FULL OF WEARY DAYS"¹¹—Page 26.



Like some broad river rushing down
alone,
With the selfsame impulse wherewith
he was thrown
From his loud fount upon the echoing
lea :—
Which with increasing might doth
forward flee
By town, and tower, and hill, and
cape, and isle,
And in the middle of the green salt
sea
Keeps his blue waters fresh for many
a mile.
Mine be the power which ever to its
sway
Will win the wise at once, and by
degrees
May into uncongenial spirits flow ;
Ev'n as the warm gulf-stream of
Florida
Floats far away into the Northern seas
The lavish growths of southern
Mexico.

iv.

ALEXANDER.

WARRIOR of God, whose strong right
arm debased
The throne of Persia, when her Satrap
bled
At Issus by the Syrian gates, or fled
Beyond the Memmian naphtha-pits,
disgraced
For ever—thee (thy pathway sand-
erased)
Gliding with equal crowns two ser-
pents led
Joyful to that palm-planted fountain-
fed
Ammonian Oasis in the waste.
There in a silent shade of laurel
brown
Apart the Chamian Oracle divine
Shelter'd his unapproached mysteries :
High things were spoken there,
unhanded down ;
Only they saw thee from the secret
shrine
Returning with hot cheek and kindled
eyes.

v.

BUNAPARTE.

HE thought to quell the stubborn
hearts of oak,
Madman !—to chain with chains, and
bind with bands
That island queen who sways the
floods and lands
From Ind to Ind, but in fair daylight
woke,
When from her wooden walls,—lit by
sure hands,—
With thunders, and with lightnings,
and with smoke,—
Peal after peal, the British battle
broke,
Lulling the brine against the Coptic
sands.
We taught him lowlier moods, when
Elsinore
Heard the war moan along the dis-
tant sea,
Rocking with shatter'd spars, with
sudden fires
Flamed over : at Trafalgar yet once
more
We taught him : late he learned
humility
Perforce, like those whom Gideon
school'd with briers.

vi.

POLAND.

How long, O God, shall men be rid-
den down,
And trampled under by the last and
least
Of men ? The heart of Poland hath
not ceased
To quiver, tho' her sacred blood doth
drown
The fields, and out of every smoulder-
ing town
Cries to Thee, lest brute Power be
increased,
Till that o'ergrown Barbarian in the
East
Transgress his ample bound to some
new crown :—
Cries to Thee, ' Lord, how long shall
these things be ?

How long this icy-hearted Muscovite
Oppress the region? Us, O just and
Good,
Forgive, who smiled when she was
torn in three;
Us, who stand now, when we should
aid the right—
A matter to be wept with tears of
blood!

VII.

CARESS'D or chidden by the slender
hand,
And singing airy trifles this or that,
Light Hope at Beauty's call would
perch and stand,
And run thro' every change of sharp
and flat;
And Fancy came and at her pillow sat,
When Sleep had bound her in his rosy
band,
And chased away the still-recurring
gnat,
And woke her with a lay from fairy
land.
But now they live with Beauty less
and less,
For Hope is other Hope and wanders
far;
Nor cares to lisp in love's delicious
creeds;
And Fancy watches in the wilderness,
Poor Fancy sadder than a single star,
That sets at twilight in a land of reeds.

VIII.

THE form, the form alone is eloquent!
A nobler yearning never broke her
rest
Than but to dance and sing, be gayly
drest,
And win all eyes with all accomplish-
ment:
Yet in the whirling dances as we went,
My fancy made me for a moment blest
To find my heart so near the beau-
teous breast
That once had power to rob it of con-
tent.
A moment came the tenderness of tears,
The phantom of a wish that once
could move,

A ghost of passion that no smiles re-
store—
For ah! the slight coquette, she can-
not love,
And if you kiss'd her feet a thousand
years,
She still would take the praise, and
care no more.

IX.

WAN Sculptor, weepst thou to take
the cast
Of those dead lineaments that near
thee lie?
O sorrowest thou, pale Painter, for the
past,
In painting some dead friend from
memory?
Weep on: beyond his object Love can
last:
His object lives: more cause to weep
have I:
My tears, no tears of love, are flowing
fast,
No tears of love, but tears that Love
can die.
I pledge her not in any cheerful cup,
Nor care to sit beside her where she
sits—
Ah pity—hint it not in human tones,
But breathe it into earth and close it
up
With secret death forever, in the pits
Which some green Christmas crams
with weary bones.

X.

IF I were loved, as I desire to be,
What is there in the great sphere of
the earth,
And range of evil between death and
birth,
That I should fear,—if I were loved
by thee?
All the inner, all the outer world of
pain
Clear Love would pierce and cleave,
if thou wert mine,
As I have heard that, somewhere in
the main,
Fresh-water springs come up through
bitter brine.



"THITHER FLOCK'D AT NOON."—Page 29.



'Twere joy, not fear, claspt hand-in-hand with thee,
To wait for death—mute—careless of all ills,
Apart upon a mountain, tho' the surge
Of some new deluge from a thousand hills
Flung leagues of roaring foam into the gorge
Below us, as far on as eye could see.

XI.

THE BRIDESMAID.

O BRIDESMAID, ere the happy knot
was tied,
Thine eyes so wept that they could
hardly see;
Thy sister smiled and said, 'No tears
for me!

A happy bridesmaid makes a happy
bride.'
And then, the couple standing side by
side,
Love lighted down between them full
of glee,
And over his left shoulder laugh'd at
thee,
'O happy bridesmaid, make a happy
bride.'
And all at once a pleasant truth I
learn'd,
For while the tender service made thee
weep,
I loved thee for the tear thou couldst
not hide,
And prest thy nand, and knew the
press return'd,
And thought, 'My life is sick of sin-
gle sleep:
O happy bridesmaid, make a happy
bride!'

THE PRINCESS;

A MEDLEY.

PROLOGUE.

SIR Walter Vivian all a summer's day
Gave his broad lawns until the set of
sun
Up to the people: thither flock'd at
noon
His tenants, wife and child, and
thither half
The neighboring borough with their
Institute
Of which he was the patron. I was
there
From college, visiting the son,—the
son
A Walter too,—with others of our set,
Five others: we were seven at Vivian-
place.

And me that morning Walter
show'd the house,
Greek, set with busts: from vases in
the hall

Flowers of all heavens, and lovelier
than their names,
Grew side by side; and on the pave-
ment lay
Carved stones of the Abbey-ruin in
the park,
Huge Ammonites, and the first bones
of Time;
And on the tables every clime and age
Jumbled together; celts and calumets,
Claymore and snowshoe, toys in lava,
fans
Of sandal, amber, ancient rosaries,
Laborious orient ivory sphere in
sphere,
The cursed Malayan crease, and bat-
tle-clubs
From the isles of palm: and higher
on the walls,
Betwixt the monstrous horns of elk
and deer,
His own forefathers' arms and armor
hung.

And 'this' he said 'was Hugh's at
Agincourt;
And that was old Sir Ralph's at As-
calon :

A good knight he ! we keep a chronicle
With all about him'—which he
brought, and I

Dived in a hoard of tales that dealt
with knights,

Half-legend, half-historic, counts and
kings

Who laid about them at their wills
and died ;

And mixt with these, a lady, one that
arm'd

Her own fair head, and sallying thro'
the gate,

Had beat her foes with slaughter
from her walls.

'O miracle of women,' said the book,
'O noble heart who, being strait-be-
sieged

By this wild king to force her to his
wish,

Nor bent, nor broke, nor shunn'd a
soldier's death,

But now when all was lost or seem'd
as lost—

Her stature more than mortal in the
burst

Of sunrise, her arm lifted, eyes on
fire—

Brake with a blast of trumpets from
the gate,

And, falling on them like a thunder-
bolt,

She trampled some beneath her
horses' heels,

And some were whelm'd with missiles
of the wall,

And some were push'd with lances
from the rock,

And part were drown'd within the
whirling brook :

O miracle of noble womanhood !'

So sang the gallant glorious
chronicle ;

And, I all rapt in this, 'Come out,' he
said,

'To the Abbey: there is Aunt Eliza-
beth

And sister Lilia with the rest.' We
went

(I kept the book and had my finger
in it)

Down thro' the park : strange was the
sight to me ;

For all the sloping pasture murmur'd,
sown

With happy faces and with holiday.
There moved the multitude, a thou-
sand heads :

The patient leaders of their Institute
Taught them with facts. One rear'd
a font of stone

And drew, from butts of water on the
slope,

The fountain of the moment, playing,
now

A twisted snake, and now a rain of
pearls,

Or steep-up spout whereon the gilded
ball

Danced like a wisp; and somewhat
lower down

A man with knobs and wires and
vials fired

A cannon : Echo answer'd in her
sleep

From hollow fields: and here were
telescopes

For azure views; and there a group
of girls

In circle waited, whom the electric
shock

Dislink'd with shrieks and laughter:
round the lake

A little clock-work steamer paddling
plied

And shook the lilies: perch'd about
the knolls

A dozen angry models jetted steam :
A petty railway ran : a fire-balloon

Rose gem-like up before the dusky
groves

And dropt a fairy parachute and past :
And there thro' twenty posts of tele-
graph

They flash'd a saucy message to and
fro

Between the mimic stations; so that
sport

Went hand in hand with Science;
otherwise

Pure sport: a herd of boys with
clamor bowl'd
And stump'd the wicket; babies roll'd
about
Like tumbled fruit in grass; and men
and maids
Arranged a country dance, and flew
thro' light
And shadow, while the twangling
violin
Struck up with Soldier-laddie, and
overhead
The broad ambrosial aisles of lofty
lime
Made noise with bees and breeze
from end to end.

Strange was the sight and smack-
ing of the time;
And long we gazed, but satiated at
length
Came to the ruins. High-arch'd and
ivy-claspt,
Of finest Gothic lighter than a fire,
Thro' one wide chasm of time and
frost they gave
The park, the crowd, the house; but
all within
The sword was trim as any garden
lawn:
And here we lit on Aunt Elizabeth,
And Lilia with the rest, and lady
friends
From neighbor seats: and there was
Ralph himself,
A broken statue propt against the
wall, &
As gay as any. Lilia, wild with sport,
Half child half woman as she was, had
wound
A scarf of orange round the stony
helm,
And robed the shoulders in a rosy silk,
That made the old warrior from his
ivied nook
Glow like a sunbeam: near his tomb
a feast
Shone, silver-set; about it lay the
guests,
And there we join'd them: then the
maiden Aunt
Took this fair day for text, and from
it preach'd

An universal culture for the crowd,
And all things great; but we, un-
worthier, told
Of college: he had climb'd across the
spikes,
And he had squeezed himself betwixt
the bars,
And he had breathed the Proctor's
dogs; and one
Discuss'd his tutor, rough to common
men,
But honeying at the whisper of a lord;
And one the Master, as a rogue in
grain
Vencer'd with sanctimonious theory.

But while they talk'd, above their
heads I saw
The feudal warrior lady-clad; which
brought
My book to mind: and opening this I
read
Of old Sir Ralph a page or two that
rang
With tilt and tourney; then the tale
of her
That drove her foes with slaughter
from her walls,
And much I praised her nobleness,
and 'Where,'
Ask'd Walter, patting Lilia's head
(she lay
Beside him) 'lives there such a woman
now?'

Quick answer'd Lilia 'There are
thousands now
Such women, but convention beats
them down:
It is but bringing up; no more than
that:
You men have done it: how I hate
you all!
Ah were I something great! I wish I
were
Some mighty poetess, I would shame
you then,
That love to keep us children! O I
wish
That I were some great princess, I
would build
Far off from men a college like a
man's,

And I would teach them all that men
are taught;
We are twice as quick!' And here
she shook aside
The hand that play'd the patron with
her curls.

And one said smiling 'Pretty were
the sight
If our old halls could change their sex,
and flaunt
With prudes for proctors, dowagers
for deans,
And sweet girl-graduates in their
golden hair.
I think they should not wear our rusty
gowns
But move as rich as Emperor-moths,
or Ralph
Who shines so in the corner; yet I fear
If there were many Lilies in the brood,
However deep you might embower the
nest,
Some boy would spy it.'

At this upon the sword
She tapt her tiny silken-sandal'd foot:
'That's your light way; but I would
make it death
For any male thing but to peep at us.'

Petulant she spoke, and at herself
she laugh'd;
A rosebud set with little wilful thorns.
And sweet as English air could make
her, she:
But Walter hail'd a score of names
upon her,
And 'petty Ogress,' and 'ungrateful
Puss,'
And swore he long'd at college, only
long'd,
All else was well, for she-society.
They boated and they cricketed; they
talk'd
At wine, in clubs, of art, of politics;
They lost their weeks; they vex'd the
souls of deans;
They rode; they betted; made a hun-
dred friends,
And caught the blossom of the flying
terms,
But miss'd the mignonette of Vivian-
place,

The little hearth-flower, Lilia. Thus
he spoke,
Part banter, part affection.

'True,' she said,
'We doubt not that. O yes, you
miss'd us much.
I'll stake my ruby ring upon it you
did.'

She held it out: and as a parrot
turns
Up thro' gilt wires a crafty loving eye,
And takes a lady's finger with all care,
And bites it for true heart and not for
harm,
So he with Lilia's. Daintily she
shriek'd
And wrung it. 'Doubt my word
again!' he said.
'Come, listen! here is proof that you
were miss'd:

We seven stay'd at Christmas up to
read;
And there we took one tutor as to
read:
The hard-grained Muses of the cube
and square
Were out of season: never man, I
think,

So moulder'd in a sinecure as he:
For while our cloisters echo'd frosty
feet,
And our long walks were stript as
bare as brooms,
We did but talk you over, pledge you
all
In wassail; often, like as many girls—
Sick for the hollies and the yews of
home—
As many little trifling Lilies—play'd
Charades and riddles as at Christmas
here,
And *what's my thought* and *when* and
where and *how*,
And often told a tale from mouth to
mouth
As here at Christmas.'

She remember'd that:
A pleasant game, she thought: she
liked it more
Than magic music, forfeits, all the rest.
But these—what kind of tales did men
tell men,

She wonder'd, by themselves?

A half-disdain
Perch'd on the pouted blossom of her
lips:

And Walter nodded at me; 'He began,
The rest would follow, each in turn;
and so

We forged a sevenfold story. Kind?
what kind?

Chimeras, crotchets, Christmas sole-
cisms,

Seven-headed monsters only made to
kill

Time by the fire in winter.'

'Kill him now,
The tyrant! kill him in the summer
too,'

Said Lilia; 'Why not now?' the
maiden Aunt.

'Why not a summer's as a winter's
tale?

A tale for summer as befits the time,
And something it should be to suit
the place,

Heroic, for a hero lies beneath,
Grave, solemn!'

Walter warp'd his mouth at this
To something so mock-solenn, that I
laugh'd

And Lilia woke with sudden-shrilling
mirth

An echo like a ghostly woodpecker,
Hid in the ruins; till the maiden
Aunt

(A little sense of wrong had touch'd
her face

With color) turn'd to me with 'As
you will;

Heroic if you will, or what you will,
Or be yourself your hero if you will.'

'Take Lilia, then, for heroine'
clamor'd he,

'And make her some great Princess,
six feet high,

Grand, epic, homicidal; and be you
The Prince to win her!'

'Then follow me, the Prince,'
I answer'd, 'each be hero in his turn!

Seven and yet one, like shadows in a
dream.—

Heroic seems our Princess as
required—

But something made to suit with Time
and place,

And Gothic ruin and a Grecian house,
A talk of college and of ladies' rights,
A feudal knight in silken masquerade,
And, yonder, shrieks and strange
experiments

For which the good Sir Ralph had
burnt them all—

This *were* a medley! we should have
him back

Who told the "Winter's tale" to do
it for us.

No matter: we will say whatever
comes.

And let the ladies sing us, if they will,
From time to time, some ballad or a
song

To give us breathing-space.'

So I began,
And the rest follow'd: and the women
sang

Between the rougher voices of the
men,

Like linnets in the pauses of the wind:
And here I give the story and the
songs.

I.

A prince I was, blue-eyed, and fair in
face,

Of temper amorous, as the first of
May,

With lengths of yellow ringlet, like a
girl,

For on my cradle shone the Northern
star.

There lived an ancient legend in
our house.

Some sorcerer, whom a far-off grand-
sire burnt

Because he cast no shadow, had fore-
told,

Dying, that none of all our blood
should know

The shadow from the substance, and
that one

Should come to fight with shadows
and to fall.

For so, my mother said, the story ran
And, truly, waking dreams were, more
or less,

An old and strange affection of the house.

Myself too had weird seizures, Heaven knows what:

On a sudden in the midst of men and day,

And while I walk'd and talk'd as heretofore,

I seem'd to move among a world of ghosts,

And feel myself the shadow of a dream.

Our great court-Galen' poised his gilt-head cane,

And paw'd his beard, and mutter'd 'catalepsy.'

My mother pitying made a thousand prayers;

My mother was as mild as any saint,
Half-canonized by all that look'd on her,

So gracious was her tact and tenderness:

But my good father thought a king a king;

He cared not for the affection of the house;

He held his sceptre like a pedant's wand

To lash offence, and with long arms and hands

Reach'd out, and pick'd offenders from the mass

For judgment.

Now it chanced that I had been,

When life was yet in bud and blade,
betroth'd

To one, a neighboring Princess: she to me

Was proxy-wedded with a bootless calf

At eight years old; and still from time to time

Came murmurs of her beauty from the South,

And of her brethren, youths of puissance;

And still I wore her picture by my heart,

And one dark tress; and all around them both

Sweet thoughts would swarm as bees about their queen.

But when the days drew nigh that I should wed,

My father sent ambassadors with furs
And jewels, gifts, to fetch her: these brought back

A present, a great labor of the loom;
And therewithal an answer vague as wind:

Besides, they saw the king; he took the gifts;

He said there was a compact; that was true:

But then she had a will; was he to blame?

And maiden fancies; loved to live alone

Among her women; certain, would not wed.

That morning in the presence room I stood

With Cyril and with Florian, my two friends:

The first a gentleman of broken means
(His father's fault) but given to starts and bursts

Of revel; and the last, my other heart,
And almost my half-self, for still we moved

Together, twinn'd as horse's ear and eye.

Now, while they spake, I saw my father's face

Grow long and troubled like a rising moon,

Inflamed with wrath: he started on his feet,

Tore the king's letter, snow'd it down,
and rent

The wonder of the loom thro' warp and woof

From skirt to skirt; and at the last he sware

That he would send a hundred thousand men,

And bring her in a whirlwind: then he chew'd

The thrice-turn'd cud of wrath, and cook'd his spleen,

Communing with his captains of the war.

At last I spoke: 'My father, let me go.
It cannot be but some gross error lies
In this report, this answer of a king,
Whom all men rate as kind and hospitable:

Or, maybe, I myself, my bride once
seen,

Whate'er my grief to find her less
than fame,

May rue the bargain made.' And
Florian said:

'I have a sister at the foreign court,
Who moves about the Princess; she,
you know,

Who wedded with a nobleman from
thence:

He, dying lately, left her, as I hear,
The lady of three castles in that land:

Thro' her this matter might be sifted
clean.'

And Cyril whisper'd: 'Take me with
you too.'

Than laughing 'what, if these weird
seizures come

Upon you in those lands, and no one
near

To point you out the shadow from the
truth!

Take me: I'll serve you better in a
strait;

I grate on rusty hinges here:' but
'No!'

Roar'd the rough king, 'you shall not;
we ourself

Will crush her pretty maiden fancies
dead

In iron gauntlets: break the council
up.'

But when the council broke, I rose
and past

Thro' the wild woods that hung about
the town;

Found a still place, and pluck'd her
likeness out;

Laid it on flowers, and watch'd it ly-
ing bathed

In the green gleam of dewy-tassell'd
trees:

What were those fancies? wherefore
break her troth?

Proud look'd the lips: but while I
meditated

A wind arose and rush'd upon the
South,

And shook the songs, the whispers,
and the shrieks

Of the wild woods together; and a
Voice

Went with it, 'Follow, follow, thou
shalt win.'

Then, ere the silver sickle of that
month

Became her golden shield, I stole from
court

With Cyril and with Florian, unper-
ceived,

Cat-footed thro' the town and half in
dread

To hear my father's clamor at our backs
With Ho! from some bay-window

shake the night;

But all was quiet: from the bastion'd
walls

Like threaded spiders, one by one, we
dropt,

And flying reach'd the frontier: then
we crost

To a livelier land; and so by tilth and
grange,

And vines, and blowing bosks of
wilderness,

We gain'd the mother-city thick with
towers,

And in the imperial palace found the
king.

His name was Gama; crack'd and
small his voice,

But bland the smile that like a wrin-
king wind

On glassy water drove his cheek in
lines;

A little dry old man, without a star,
Not like a king: three days he feasted

us,

And on the fourth I spake of why we
came,

And my betroth'd. 'You do us,
Prince,' he said,

Airing a snowy hand and signet gem,
'All honor. We remember love our-

selves
In our sweet youth: there did a com-
pact pass

Long summers back, a kind of cere-
mony—

I think the year in which our olives
fail'd.

I would you had her, Prince, with all
my heart,

With my full heart : but there were
widows here,

Two widows, Lady Psyche, Lady
Blanche ;

They fed her theories, in and out of
place

Maintaining that with equal hus-
bandry

The woman were an equal to the man.
They harp'd on this ; with this our

banquets rang ;

Our dances broke and buzz'd in knots
of talk ;

Nothing but this ; my very ears were
hot

To hear them : knowledge, so my
daughter held,

Was all in all : they had but been, she
thought,

As children ; they must lose the child,
assume

The woman : then, Sir, awful odes she
wrote,

Too awful, sure, for what they treated
of,

But all she is and does is awful ; odes
About this losing of the child ; and

rhymes

And dismal lyrics, prophesying change
Beyond all reason : these the women

sang ;

And they that know such things—I
sought but peace ;

No critic I—would call them master-
pieces :

They master'd *me*. At last she begg'd
a boon,

A certain summer-palace which I have
Hard by your father's frontier : I said

no,

Yet being an easy man, gave it : and
there,

All wild to found an University
For maidens, on the spur she fled ;

and more
We know not,—only this : they see no
men,

Not ev'n her brother Arac, nor the
twins

Her brethren, tho' they love her,
look upon her

As on a kind of paragon ; and I
(Pardon me saying it) were much loth

to breed
Dispute betwixt myself and mine :

but since
(And I confess with right) you think

me bound
In some sort, I can give you letters to

her ;
And yet, to speak the truth, I rate

your chance
Almost at naked nothing.'

Thus the king ;
And I, tho' nettled that he seem'd to

slur
With garrulous ease and oily cour-
tesies

Our formal compact, yet, not less (all
frets

But chafing me on fire to find my
bride)

Went forth again with both my
friends. We rode

Many a long league back to the North.
At last

From hills, that look'd across a land
of hope,

We dropt with evening on a rustic
town

Set in a gleaming river's crescent-
curve,

Close at the boundary of the liber-
ties ;

There, enter'd an old hostel, call'd
mine host

To council, plied him with his richest
wines,

And show'd the late-writ letters of the
king

.
He with a long low sibilation, stared
As blank as death in marble ; then ex-
claim'd

Averring it was clear against all rules
For any man to go : but as his brain

Began to mellow, 'If the king,' he
said,

'Had given us letters, was he bound to
speak ?

The king would bear him out ; and at
the last—
The summer of the vine in all his
veins—
'No doubt that we might make it
worth his while.
She once had past that way ; he heard
her speak ;
She scared him ; life! he never saw
the like ;
She look'd as grand as doomsday and
as grave :
And he, he revered his liege-lady
there ;
He always made a point to post with
mares ;
His daughter and his housemaid were
the boys :
The land, he understood, for miles
about
Was till'd by women ; all the swine
were sows,
And all the dogs '—
But while he jested thus,
A thought flash'd thro' me which I
clothed in act,
Remembering how we three presented
Maid
Or Nymph, or Goddess, at high tide
of feast,
In masque or pageant at my father's
court.
We sent mine host to purchase female
gear ;
He brought it, and himself, a sight to
shake
The midriff of despair with laughter,
help
To lace us up, till, each, in maiden
plumes
We rustled : him we gave a costly
bribe
To guerdon silence, mounted our good
steeds,
And boldly ventured on the liberties.

We loved up the river as we rode.
And rode till midnight when the
college lights
Began to glitter firefly-like in copse
And linden alley : then we past an arch,
Whereon a woman-statue rose with
wings

From four wing'd horses dark against
the stars ;
And some inscription ran along the
front,
But deep in shadow : further on we
gain'd
A little street half garden and half
house ;
But scarce could hear each other speak
for noise
Of clocks and chimes, like silver
hammers falling
On silver anvils, and the splash and
stir
Of fountains spouted up and shower-
ing down
In meshes of the jasmine and the rose :
And all about us peal'd the nightin-
gale,
Rapt in her song, and careless of the
snare.

There stood a bust of Pallas for a
sign,
By two sphere lamps blazon'd like
Heaven and Earth
With constellation and with continent,
Above an entry : riding in, we call'd ;
A plump-arm'd Ostleress and a stable
wench
Came running at the call, and help'd
us down.
Then stopt a buxom hostess forth, and
sail'd,
Full-blown, before us into rooms
which gave
Upon a pillar'd porch, the bases lost
In laurel : her we ask'd of that and
this,
And who were tutors. ' Lady Blanche'
she said,
' And Lady Psyche.' ' Which was
prettiest,
Best-natured ? ' ' Lady Psyche.' ' Hers
are we.'
One voice, we cried ; and I sat down
and wrote,
In such a hand as when a field of corn
Bows all its ears before the roaring
East ;
' Three ladies of the Northern empire
pray

Your Highness would enroll them with
your own,
As Lady Psyche's pupils.'

This I seal'd:
The seal was Cupid bent above a
scroll,
And o'er his head Uranian Venus
hung,
And raised the blinding bandage from
his eyes:

I gave the letter to be sent with dawn;
And then to bed, where half in doze I
seem'd

To float about a glimmering night,
and watch

A full sea glazed with muffled moon-
light, swell

On some dark shore just seen that it
was rich.

II.

As thro' the land at eve we went,
And pluck'd the ripen'd ears,
We fell out, my wife and I,
O we fell out I know not why,
And kiss'd again with tears.
And blessings on the falling out
That all the more endears,
When we fall out with those we love
And kiss again with tears!
For when we came where lies the child
We lost in other years,
There above the little grave,
O there above the little grave,
We kiss'd again with tears.

At break of day the College Portress
came:

She brought us Academic silks, in hue
The lilac, with a silken hood to each,
And zoned with gold; and now when
these were on,

And we as rich as moths from dust
cocoons,

She, curtsying her obeisance, let us
know

The Princess Ida waited: out we
paced,

I first, and following thro' the porch
that sang

All round with laurel, issued in a
court

Compact of lucid marbles, boss'd with
lengths

Of classic frieze, with ample awnings
gay

Betwix the pillars, and with great
urns of flowers.

The Muses and the Graces, group'd
in threes,

Enring'd a billowing fountain in the
midst;

And here and there on lattice edges lay
Or book or lute; but hastily we past,

And up a flight of stairs into the hall.

There at a board by tome and paper
sat,

With two tame leopards couch'd
beside her throne

All beauty compass'd in a female form,
The Princess; liker to the inhabitant
Of some clear planet close upon the
Sun,

Than our man's earth; such eyes were
in her head,

And so much grace and power, breath-
ing down

From over her arch'd brows, with
every turn

Lived thro' her to the tips of her long
hands,

And to her feet. She rose her height,
and said:

'We give you welcome: not without
redound

Of use and glory to yourselves ye
come,

The first fruits of the stranger: after-
time,

And that full voice which circles
round the grave,

Will rank you nobly, mingled up with
me.

What! are the ladies of your land so
tall?'

'We of the court' said Cyril. 'From
the court'

She answer'd, 'then ye know the
Prince?' and he:

'The climax of his age! as tho' there
were

One rose in all the world, your High-
ness that,

He worships your ideal : ' she replied :
' We scarcely thought in our own hall
to hear

This barren verbiage, current among
men,
Light coin, the tinsel clink of compli-
ment.

Your flight from out your bookless
wilds would seem

As arguing love of knowledge and of
power ;

Your language proves you still the
child. Indeed,

We dream not of him : when we set
our hand

To this great work, we purposed with
ourselves

Never to wed. You likewise will do
well,

Ladies, in entering here, to cast and
fling

The tricks, which make us toys of
men, that so,

Some future time, if so indeed you will,
You may with those self-styled our

lords ally

Your fortunes, justlier balanced, scale
with scale.'

At those high words, we conscious
of ourselves,

Perused the matting ; then an officer
Rose up, and read the statues, such as

these :

Not for three years to correspond with
home ;

Not for three years to cross the liber-
ties ;

Not for three years to speak with any
men ;

And many more, which hastily sub-
scribed,

We enter'd on the boards : and ' Now,'
she cried,

' Ye are green wood, see ye warp not.
Look, our hall !

Our statues !—not of those that men
desire,

Steek Odaliskues, or oracles of mode,
Nor stunted squaws of West or East ;

but she

That taught the Sabine how to rule,
and she

The foundress of the Babylonian wall,
The Carian Artemisia strong in war,
The Rhodope, that built the pyramid,
Clelia, Cornelia, with the Palmyrene
That fought Aurelian, and the Roman
brows

Of Agrippina. Dwell with these, and
lose

Convention, since to look on noble
forms

Makes noble thro' the sensuous
organism

That which is higher. O lift your
natures up :

Embrace our aims : work out your
freedom. Girls,

Knowledge is now no more a fountain
seal'd :

Drink deep, until the habits of the
slave,

The sins of emptiness, gossip and
spite

And slander, die. Better not be at all
Than not be noble. Leave us :

you may go :

To-day the Lady Psyche will harangue
The fresh arrivals of the week before ;

For they press in from all the prov-
inces,

And fill the hive.'

She spoke, and bowing waved
Dismissal : back again we crost the

court

To Lady Psyche's : as we enter'd in,
There sat along the forms, like morn-
ing doves

That sun their milky bosoms on the
thatch,

A patient range of pupils ; she herself
Erect behind a desk of satin-wood

A quick brunette, well-moulded, falcon
eyed,

And on the hither side, or so she
look'd,

Of twenty summers. At her left, a
child,

In shining draperies, headed like a
star,

Her maiden babe, a double April old,
Aglaia slept. We sat : the Lady

glanced :

Then Florian, but no livelier than the
dame

That whisper'd 'Asses' ears,' among
the sedge,
'My sister,' 'Comely, too, by all that's
fair,
Said Cyril. 'O hush, hush!' and she
began.

'This world was once a fluid haze
of light.
Till toward the centre set the starry
tides,
And eddied into suns, that wheeling
cast
The planets: then the monster, then
the man;
Tattoo'd or woaded, winter-clad in
skins,
Raw from the prime, and crushing
down his mate;
As yet we find in barbarous isles, and
here
Among the lowest.'

Thereupon she took
A bird's-eye-view of all the ungracious
past;
Glanced at the legendary Amazon
As emblematic of a nobler age;
Appraised the Lycian custom, spoke
of those
That lay at wine with Lar and
Lucumo;
Ran down the Persian, Grecian, Ro-
man lines
Of empire, and the woman's state in
each,
How far from just; till warming with
her theme
She fulminated out her scorn of laws
Salique
And little-footed China, touch'd on
Mahomet
With much contempt, and came to
chivalry:
When some respect, however slight,
was paid
To woman, superstition all awry:
However then commenced the dawn:
a beam
Had slanted forward, falling in a land
Of promise; fruit would follow.
Deep, indeed,
Their debt of thanks to her who first
had dared

To leap the rotten pales of prejudice,
Disyoke their necks from custom, and
assert

None lordlier than themselves but that
which made
Woman and man. She had founded;
they must build

Here might they learn whatever men
were taught:

Let them not fear: some said their
heads were less:

Some men's were small; not they the
least of men;

For often fineness compensated size:
Besides the brain was like the hand,
and grew

With using; thence the man's, if more
was more;

He took advantage of his strength to
be

First in the field: some ages had been
lost;

But woman ripen'd earlier, and her
life

Was longer; and albeit their glorious
names

Were fewer, scatter'd stars, yet since
in truth

The highest is the measure of the
man,

And not the Kaffir, Hottentot, Malay,
Nor those horn-handed breakers of
the glebe,

But Homer, Plato, Verulam; even so
With woman: and in arts of govern-
ment

Elizabeth and others; arts of war
The peasant Joan and others; arts of
grace

Sappho and others vied with any man:
And, last not least, she who had left
her place,

And bow'd her state to them, that they
might grow

To use and power on this Oasis, lapt
In the arms of leisure, sacred from the
blight

Of ancient influence and scorn.

At last
She rose upon a wind of prophecy

Dilating on the future; 'everywhere
Two heads in council, two beside the
hearth,

Two in the tangled business of the world,
Two in the liberal offices of life,
Two plummetts dropt for one to sound the abyss
Of science, and the secrets of the mind:
Musician, painter, sculptor, critic, more:
And everywhere the broad and bounteous Earth
Should bear a double growth of those rare souls,
Poets, whose thoughts enrich the blood of the world.'

She ended here, and beckon'd us: the rest
Parted; and, glowing full-faced welcome, she
Began to address us, and was moving on
In gratulation, till as when a boat
Tacks, and the slacken'd sail flaps, all her voice
Faltering and fluttering in her throat,
she cried
'My brother!' 'Well, my sister.' 'O,' she said,
'What do you here? and in this dress? and these?
Why who are these? a wolf within the fold!
A pack of wolves! the Lord be gracious to me!
A plot, a plot, a plot, to ruin all!' 'No plot, no plot,' he answer'd.
'Wretched boy,
How saw you not the inscription on the gate,
LET NO MAN ENTER IN ON PAIN OF DEATH?'
'And if I had,' he answer'd, 'who could think
The softer Adams of your Academe
O sister, Sirens tho' they be, were such
As chanted on the blanching bones of men?'
'But you will find it otherwise,' she said.
'You jest: ill jesting with edge-tools! my vow

Binds me to speak, and O that iron will
That axelike edge unturnable, our Head,
The Princess.' 'Well then, Psyche, take my life,
And nail me like a weasel on a grange
For warning: bury me beside the gate,
And cut this epitaph above my bones:
*Here lies a brother by a sister slain,
All for the common good of woman-kind.*
'Let me die too,' said Cyril, 'having seen
And heard the Lady Psyche.'
I struck in:
'Albeit so mask'd, Madam, I love the truth;
Receive it; and in me behold the Prince
Your countryman, affianced years ago
To the Lady Ida: here, for here she was,
And thus (what other way was left) I came.'
'O Sir, O Prince, I have no country; none;
If any, this; but none. Whate'er I was
Disrooted, what I am is grafted here.
Affianced, Sir? love-whispers may not breathe
Within this vestal limit, and how should I,
Who am not mine, say, live: the thunder-bolt
Hangs silent; but prepare: I speak; it falls.'
'Yet pause,' I said: 'for that inscription there,
I think no more of deadly lurks therein,
Than in a clapper clapping in a garth,
To scare the fowl from fruit: if more there be,
If more and acted on, what follows? war;
Your own work marr'd: for this your Academe,
Whichever side be Victor, in the halloo
Will topple to the trumpet down, and pass

With all fair theories only made to
gild
A stormless summer.' 'Let the
Princess judge
Of that,' she said: 'farewell, Sir—and
to you.
I shudder at the sequel, but I go.'

'Are you that Lady Psyche,' I re-
join'd,
'The fifth in line from that old
Florian,
Yet hangs his portrait in my father's
hall
(The gaunt old Baron with his beetle
brow
Sun-shaded in the heat of dusty fights)
As he bestrode my Grandsire, when he
fell
And all else fled? we point to it, and
we say,
The loyal warmth of Florian is not
cold,
But branches current yet in kindred
veins.'

'Are you that Psyche,' Florian added;
'she

With whom I sang about the morning
hills,
Flung ball, flew kite, and raced the
purple fly,
And snared the squirrel of the glen?
are you
That Psyche, wont to bind my throbbing
brow,
To smoothe my pillow, mix the foaming
draught
Of fever, tell me pleasant tales, and
read
My sickness down to happy dreams?
are you

That brother-sister Psyche, both in
one?

You were that Psyche, but what are
you now?' 'You

are that Psyche,' Cyril said,
'for whom

I would be that for ever which I
seem,

Woman, if I might sit beside your
feet,

And glean your scatter'd sapience.'

'Then once more,

'Are you that Lady Psyche,' I be-
gan,

'That on her bridal morn before she
past

From all her old companions, when
the king

Kiss'd her pale cheek, declared that
ancient ties

Would still be dear beyond the south-
ern hills;

That were there any of our people
there

In want or peril, there was one to
hear

And help them? look! for such are
these and I.'

'Are you that Psyche,' Florian ask'd,
'to whom,

In gentler days, your arrow-wounded
fawn

Came flying while you sat beside the
well?

The creature laid his muzzle on your
lap,

And sobb'd, and you sobb'd with it,
and the blood

Was sprinkled on your kirtle, and you
wept.

That was fawn's blood, not brother's,
yet you wept.

O by the bright head of my little
niece,

You were that Psyche, and what are
you now?' 'You

are that Psyche,' Cyril said
again,

'The mother of the sweetest little
maid,

That ever crow'd for kisses.'

'Out upon it!'
She answer'd, 'peace! and why should
I not play

The Spartan Mother with emotion,
be

The Lucius Junius Brutus of my
kind?

Him you call great: he for the com-
mon weal,

The fading politics of mortal Rome,
As I might slay this child if good

need were,
Slew both his sons: and I, shall I, on
whom

The secular emancipation turns
Of half this world, be swerved from
right to save
A prince, a brother? a little will I
yield.
Best so, perchance, for us, and well
for you.
O hard, when love and duty clash! I
fear
My conscience will not count me
fleckless; yet—
Hear my conditions: promise (other-
wise
You perish) as you came, to slip away
To-day, to-morrow, soon: it shall be
said,
These women were too barbarous,
would not learn;
They fled, who might have shamed
us: promise, all.'

What could we else, we promised
each; and she,
Like some wild creature newly-caged,
commenced
A to-and-fro, so pacing till she paused
By Florian; holding out her lily arms
Took both his hands, and smiling
faintly, said:
'I knew you at the first: tho' you
have grown
You scarce have alter'd: I am sad
and glad
To see you, Florian. I give thee to
death
My brother! it was duty spoke, not I.
My needful seeming harshness, par-
don it.
Our mother, is she well?'
With that she kiss'd
His forehead, then, a moment after,
clung
About him, and betwixt them blos-
som'd up
From out a common vein of memory
Sweet household talk, and phrases of
the hearth,
And far allusion, till the gracious
dews
Began to glisten and to fall: and
while
They stood, so rapt, we gazing, came
a voice,

'I brought a message here from Lady
Blanche.
Back started she, and turning round
we saw
The Lady Blanche's daughter where
she stood,
Melissa, with her hand upon the lock,
A rosy blonde, and in a college gown,
That clad her like an April daffodilly
(Her mother's color) with her lips
apart,
And all her thoughts as fair within
her eyes,
As bottom agates seen to wave and
float
In crystal currents of clear morning
seas.

So stood that same fair creature at
the door.
Then Lady Psyche, 'Ah—Melissa—
you!
You heard us?' and Melissa, 'O par-
don me
I heard, I could not help it, did not
wish:
But, dearest Lady, pray you fear me
not,
Nor think I bear that heart within my
breast,
To give three gallant gentlemen to
death.'
'I trust you,' said the other, 'for we
two
Were always friends, none closer,
elm and vine:
But yet your mother's jealous temper-
ament—
Let not your prudence, dearest,
drowse, or prove
The Danaid of a leaky vase, for fear
This whole foundation ruin, and I
lose
My honor, these their lives.' 'Ah,
fear me not,'
Replied Melissa; 'no—I would not
tell,
No, not for all Aspasia's cleverness,
No, not to answer, Madam, all those
hard things
That Sheba came to ask of Solomon.'
'Be it so,' the other, 'that we still
may lead

The new light up, and culminate in
 peace,
 For Solomon may come to Sheba
 yet.
 Said Cyril, 'Madam, he the wisest
 man
 Feasted the woman wisest then, in
 halls
 Of Lebanonian cedar: nor should you
 (Tho' Madam *you* should answer, *we*
 would ask)
 Less welcome find among us, if you
 came
 Among us, debtors for our lives to
 you,
 Myself for something more.' He
 said not what,
 But 'Thanks,' she answer'd 'Go:
 we have been too long
 Together: keep your hoods about
 the face;
 They do so that affect abstraction
 here.
 Speak little; mix not with the rest;
 and hold
 Your promise: all, I trust, may yet
 be well.'

We turn'd to go, but Cyril took the
 child,
 And held her round the knees against
 his waist,
 And blew the swoll'n check of a
 trumpeter,
 While Psyche watch'd them, smiling,
 and the child
 Push'd her flat hand against his face
 and laugh'd;
 And thus our conference closed.
 And then we stroll'd
 For half the day thro' stately thea-
 tres
 Bench'd crescent wise. In each we
 sat, we heard
 The grave Professor. On the lecture
 slate
 The circle rounded under female hands
 With flawless demonstration: fol-
 low'd then
 A classic lecture, rich in sentiment,
 With scraps of thundrous Epic lilted
 out
 By violet-hooded Doctors, elegies

And quoted odes, and jewels five-
 words-long
 That on the stretch'd forefinger of all
 Time
 Sparkle for ever: then we dipt in all
 That treats of whatsoever is, the state,
 The total chronicles of man, the
 mind,
 The morals, something of the frame,
 the rock,
 The star, the bird, the fish, the shell,
 the flower,
 Electric, chemic laws, and all the rest,
 And whatsoever can be taught and
 known;
 Till like three horses that have broken
 fence,
 And glutt'd all night long breast-deep
 in corn,
 We issued gorged with knowledge,
 and I spoke:
 'Why, Sirs, they do all this as well as
 we.'
 'They hunt old trails' said Cyril
 'very well;
 But when did woman ever yet invent?'
 'Ungracious!' answer'd Florian;
 'have you learnt
 No more from Psyche's lecture, you
 that talk'd
 The trash that made me sick, and al-
 most sad?'
 'O trash' he said, 'but with a kernel
 in it.
 Should I not call her wise, who made
 me wise?
 And learnt? I learnt more from her
 in a flash,
 Than if my brainpan were an empty
 hull,
 And every Muse tumbled a science in.
 A thousand hearts lie fallow in these
 halls,
 And round these halls a thousand
 baby loves
 Fly twanging headless arrows at the
 hearts,
 Whence follows many a vacant pang;
 but O
 With me, Sir, enter'd in the bigger
 boy,
 The Head of all the golden-shafted
 firm,

The long-limb'd lad that had a Psyche
too;
He cleit me thro' the stomacher; and
now
What think you of it, Florian? do I
chase
The substance or the shadow? will it
hold?
I have no sorcerer's malison on me,
No ghostly hauntings like his High-
ness. I
Flatter myself that always everywhere
I know the substance when I see it.
Well,
Are castles shadows? Three of
them? Is she
The sweet proprietress a shadow?
If not,
Shall those three castles patch my
tatter'd coat?
For dear are those three castles to
my wants,
And dear is sister Psyche to my heart,
And two dear things are one of double
worth,
And much I might have said, but
that my zone
Unmann'd me: then the Doctors! O
to hear
The Doctors! O to watch the thirsty
plants
Inbibing! once or twice I thought to
roar,
To break my chain, to shake my
mane: but thou,
Modulate me, Soul of mincing mimic-
ry!
Make liquid treble of that bassoon,
my throat;
Abase those eyes that ever loved to
meet
Star-sisters answering under crescent
brows;
Abate the stride, which speaks of
man, and loose
A flying charm of blushes o'er this
cheek,
Where they like swallows coming out
of time
Will wonder why they came: but
hark the bell
For dinner, let us go!'

And in we stream'd

Among the columns, pacing staid and
still
By twos and threes, till all from end
to end
With beauties every shade of brown
and fair
In colors gayer than the morning
mist,
The long hall glitter'd like a bed of
flowers.
How nigh a man not wander from
his wits
Pierced thro' with eyes, but that I
kept mine own
Intent on her, who wrapt in glorious
dreams,
The second sight of some Astræan
age,
Sat compass'd with professors: they,
the while,
Discuss'd a doubt and tost it to and
fro:
A clamor thicken'd, mixt with inmost
terms
Of art and science: Lady Blanche
alone
Of faded form and haughtiest linea-
ments,
With all her autumn tresses falsely
brown,
Shot sidelong daggers at us, a tiger-
cat
In act to spring.
At last a solemn grace
Concluded, and we sought the gar-
dens: there
One walk'd reciting by herself, and
one
In this hand held a volume as to read,
And smoothed a petted peacock down
with that:
Some to a low song oar'd a shallop by,
Or under arches of the marble bridge
Hung, shadow'd from the heat: some
hid and sought
In the orange thickets: others tost a
ball
Above the fountain-jets, and back
again
With laughter: others lay about the
lawns,
Of the older sort, and murmur'd that
their May

Was passing : what was learning unto
 them?
 They wish'd to marry; they could
 rule a house;
 Men hated learned women: but we
 three
 Sat muffled like the Fates; and often
 came
 Melissa hitting all we saw with shafts
 Of gentle satire, kin to charity,
 That harm'd not: then day droopt;
 the chapel bells
 Call'd us: we left the walks; we mixt
 with those
 Six hundred maidens clad in purest
 white,
 Before two streams of light from wall
 to wall,
 While the great organ almost burst
 his pipes,
 Groaning for power, and rolling thro'
 the court
 A long melodious thunder to the
 sound
 Of solemn psalms, and silver litanies.
 The work of Ida, to call down from
 Heaven
 A blessing on her labors for the world.

III.

Sweet and low, sweet and low,
 Wind of the western sea,
 Low, low, breathe and blow,
 Wind of the western sea!
 Over the rolling waters go,
 Come from the dying moon, and blow,
 Blow him again to me;
 While my little one, while my pretty one,
 sleeps.

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,
 Father will come to thee soon;
 Rest, rest, on mother's breast,
 Father will come to thee soon,
 Father will come to his babe in the nest,
 Silver sails all out of the west,
 Under the silver moon:
 Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one,
 sleep.

Morn in the white wake of the morn-
 ing star

Came furrowing all the orient into
 gold.
 We rose, and each by other drest with
 care
 Descended to the court that lay three
 parts
 In shadow, but the Muses' heads were
 touch'd
 Above the darkness from their native
 East.

There while we stood beside the
 fount, and watch'd
 Or seem'd to watch the dancing bub-
 ble, approach'd
 Melissa, tinged with wan from lack of
 sleep,
 Or grief, and glowing round her dewy
 eyes
 The circled Iris of a night of tears;
 'And fly,' she cried, 'O fly, while yet
 you may!
 My mother knows: ' and when I ask'd
 her 'how,'
 'My fault' she wept 'my fault! and
 yet not mine;
 Yet mine in part. O hear me, pardon
 me.
 My mother, 'tis her wont from night
 to night
 To rail at Lady Psyche and her side.
 She says the Princess should have
 been the Head,
 Herself and Lady Psyche the two
 arms;
 And so it was agreed when first they
 came;
 But Lady Psyche was the right hand
 now,
 And she the left, or not, or seldom used;
 Hers more than half the students, all
 the love.
 And so last night she fell to canvass
 you
 Her countrywomen! she did not envy
 her.
 "Who ever saw such wild barbarians?
 Girls?—more like men!" and at these
 words the snake,
 My secret, seem'd to stir within my
 breast;
 And oh, Sirs, could I help it, but my
 cheek

Began to burn and burn, and her lynx
eye
To fix and make me hotter, till she
laugh'd:
"O marvellously modest maiden, you!
Men! girls, like men! why, if they had
been men
You need not set your thoughts in ru-
bric thus
For wholesale comment." Pardon, I
am shamed
That I must needs repeat for my ex-
cuse
What looks so little graceful: "men"
(for still
My mother went revolving on the
word)
"And so they are,—very like men in-
deed—
And with that woman closeted for
hours!"
Then came these dreadful words out
one by one,
"Why—these—*are*—men:" I shud-
der'd: "and you know it."
"O ask me nothing," I said: "And
she knows too,
And she conceals it." So my mother
clutch'd
The truth at once, but with no word
from me;
And now thus early risen she goes to
inform
The Princess: Lady Psyche will be
crush'd;
But you may yet be saved, and there-
fore fly:
But heal me with your pardon ere you
go.
'What pardon, sweet Melissa, for
a blush?'
Said Cyril: 'Pale one, blush again:
than wear
Those lilies, better blush our lives
away.
Yet let us breathe for one hour more
in Heaven'
He added, 'lest some classic Angel
speak
In scorn of us, "They mounted, Gany-
medes,
To tumble, Vulcans, on the second
morn."

But I will melt this marble into wax
To yield us farther furlough:' and he
went.

Melissa shook her doubtful curls,
and thought
He scarce would prosper. 'Teil us,'
Florian ask'd,
'How grew this feud betwixt the right
and left.'
'O long ago,' she said, 'betwixt these
two
Division smoulders hidden; 'tis my
mother,
Too jealous, often fretful as the wind
Pent in a crevice: much I bear with her:
I never knew my father, but she says
(God help her) she was wedded to a
fool;
And still she rail'd against the state
of things.
She had the care of Lady Ida's youth,
And from the Queen's decease she
brought her up.
But when your sister came she won
the heart
Of Ida: they were still together, grew
(For so they said themselves) inoscu-
lated;
Consonant chords that shiver to one
note;
One mind in all things: yet my mother
still
Affirms your Psyche thieved her theo-
ries,
And angled with them for her pupil's
love:
She calls her plagiarist: I know not
what:
But I must go: I dare not tarry,' and
light,
As flies the shadow of a bird, she fled.

Then murmur'd Florian gazing after
her,
'An open-hearted maiden, true and
pure.
If I could love, why this were she:
how pretty
Her blushing was, and how she
blush'd again,
As if to close with Cyril's random
wish:

Not like your Princess cramm'd with
erring pride,
Nor like poor Psyche whom she drags
in tow.

'The crane,' I said, 'may chatter of
the crane,
The dove may murmur of the dove,
but I
An eagle clang an eagle to the sphere.
My princess, O my princess! true she
errs,
But in her own grand way: being her-
self
Three times more noble than three
score of men,
She sees herself in every woman else,
And so she wears her error like a
crown
To blind the truth and me: for her,
and her,
Hebes are they to hand ambrosia, mix
The nectar; but—ah she—whene'er
she moves
The Samian Herè rises and she
speaks
A Memnon smitten with the morning
Sun.'

So saying from the court we paced,
and gain'd
The terrace ranged along the North-
ern front,
And leaping there on those balusters,
high
Above the empurpled champaign,
drank the gale
That blown about the foliage under-
neath,
And sated with the innumerable rose,
Beat balm upon your eyelids. Hither
came
Cyril, and yawning 'O hard task,' he
cried;
'No fighting shadows here! I forced
a way
Thro' solid opposition crabb'd and
gnarl'd.
Better to clear prime forests, heave
and thump
A league of street in summer solstice
down,
Than hammer at this reverend gentle-
woman.

I knock'd and, bidden, enter'd; found
her there
At point to move, and settled in her
eyes
The green malignant light of coming
storm.
Sir, I was courteous, every phrase well-
oil'd,
As man's could be; yet maiden-meek
I pray'd
Concealment: she demanded who we
were,
And why we came? I fabled nothing
fair,
But, your example pilot, told her all.
Up went the hush'd amaze of hand
and eye.
But when I dwelt upon your old
affiance,
She answer'd sharply that I talk'd
astray.
I urged the fierce inscription on the
gate,
And our three lives. True—we had
lined ourselves
With open eyes, and we must take
the chance.
But such extremes, I told her, well
might harm
The woman's cause. "Not more
than now," she said,
"So puddled as it is with favoritism."
I tried the mother's heart. Shame
might befall
Melissa, knowing, saying not she
knew:
Her answer was "Leave me to deal
with that."
I spoke of war to come and many
deaths,
And she replied, her duty was to
speak,
And duty duty, clear of consequences.
I grew discouraged, Sir; but since I
knew
No rock so hard but that a little wave
May beat admission in a thousand
years,
I recommenced; "decide not ere you
pause.
I find you here but in the second place,
Some say the third—the authentic
foundress you.

I offer boldly : we will seat you highest.
Wink at our advent : help my prince
to gain
His rightful bride, and here I promise
you
Some palace in our land, where you
shall reign
The head and heart of all our fair she-
world,
And your great name flow on with
broadening time
For ever." Well, she balanced this a
little,
And told me she would answer us to-
day,
Meantime be mute : thus much, nor
more I gain'd.'

He ceasing, came a message from
the Head.
'That afternoon the Princess rode to
take
The dip of certain strata to the North.
Would we go with her? we should
find the land
Worth seeing; and the river made a
fall
Out yonder : ' then she pointed on to
where
A double hill ran up his furrowy forks
Beyond the thick-leaved platans of the
vale.

Agreed to, this, the day fled on thro'
all
Its range of duties to the appointed
hour.
Then summon'd to the porch we went.
She stood
Among her maidens, higher by the
head,
Her back against a pillar, her foot on
one
Of those tame leopards. Kittenlike
he roll'd
And paw'd about her sandal. I drew
near;
I gazed. On a sudden my strange
seizure came
Upon me, the weird vision of our
house :
The Princess Ida seem'd a hollow
show,

Her gay-furr'd cats a painted fantasy,
Her college and her maidens, empty
masks,
And I myself the shadow of a dream,
For all things were and were not. Yet
I felt
My heart beat thick with passion and
with awe;
Then from my breast the involuntary
sigh
Brake, as she smote me with the light
of eyes
That lent my knee desire to kneel, and
shook
My pulses, till to horse we got, and so
Went forth in long retinue following
up
The river as it narrow'd to the hills.

I rode beside her and to me she
said :
'O friend, we trust that you esteem'd
us not
Too harsh to your companion yester-
morn;
Unwillingly we spake ' 'No—not to
her,
I answer'd, 'but to one of whom we
spake
Your Highness might have seem'd
the thing you say.'
'Again?' she cried, 'are you ambassa-
dresses
From him to me? we give you, being
strange,
A license : speak, and let the topic die.'

I stammer'd that I knew him—could
have wish'd—
'Our king expects—was there no pre-
contract?
There is no truer-hearted—ah, you
seem
All he prefigured, and he could not
see
The bird of passage flying south but
long'd
To follow: surely, if your Highness
keep
Your purport, you will shock him ev'n
to death,
Or baser courses, children of despair.'

'Poor boy,' she said, 'can he not
read—no books?
Quoit, tennis, ball—no games? nor
deals in that
Which men delight in, martial exercise?
To nurse a blind ideal like a girl,
Methinks he seems no better than a
girl;
As girls were once, as we ourself have
been:
We had our dreams; perhaps he mixt
with them:
We touch on our dead self, nor shun
to do it,
Being other—since we learnt our
meaning here,
To lift the woman's fall'n divinity
Upon an even pedestal with man.'

She paused, and added with a
haughtier smile
'And as to precontracts, we move,
my friend,
At no man's beck, but know ourself
and thee,
O Vashti, noble Vashti! Summon'd out
She kept her state, and left the
drunken king
To brawl at Shushan underneath the
the palms.'

'Alas your Highness breaths full
East,' I said,
'On that which leans to you. I know
the Prince,
I prize his truth: and then how vast a
work
To assail this gray preëminence of
man!
You grant me license; might I use it?
think;
Ere half be done perchance your life
may fail;
Then comes the feeblèr heiress of
your plan,
And takes and ruins all; and thus
your pains
May only make that footprint upon
sand
Which old-recurring waves of prej-
udice
Resmooth to nothing: might I dread
that you,

With only Fame for spouse and your
great deeds
For issue, yet may live in vain, and
miss,
Meanwhile, what every woman counts
her due,
Love, children, happiness?'
And she exclaim'd,
'Peace, you young savage of the
Northern wild!
What! tho' your Prince's love were
like a God's,
Have we not made ourself the sacri-
fice?
You are bold indeed: we are not talk'd
to thus:
Yet will we say for children, would
they grew
Like field-flowers everywhere! we like
them well:
But children die; and let me tell you,
girl,
Howe'er you babble, great deeds can-
not die;
They with the sun and moon renew
their light
For ever, blessing those that look on
them.
Children—that men may pluck them
from our hearts,
Kill us with pity, break us with our-
selves—
O—children—there is nothing upon
earth
More miserable than she that has a son
And sees him err: nor would we work
for fame;
Tho' she perhaps might reap the
applause of Great,
Who learns the one FOR SRO whence
afterhands
May move the world, tho' she herself
effect
But little; wherefore up and act, nor
shrink
For fear our solid aim be dissipated
By frail successors. Would, indeed,
we had been,
In lieu of many mortal flies, a race
Of giants living, each, a thousand
years,
That we might see our own work out,
and watch

The sandy footprint harden into stone.'

I answer'd nothing, doubtful in my-
self
If that strange Poet-princess with her
grand
Imaginations might at all be won.
And she broke out interpreting my
thoughts :

'No doubt we seem a kind of
monster to you;
We are used to that; for women, up
till this
Cramp'd under worse than South-sea-
isle taboo,
Dwarfs of the gynæceum, fail so far
In high desire, they know not, cannot
guess
How much their welfare is a passion
to us.
If we could give them surer, quicker
proof—
Oh if our end were less achievable
By slow approaches, than by single
act
Of immolation, any phase of death,
We were as prompt to spring against
the pikes,
Or down the fiery gulf as talk of it,
To compass our dear sisters' liberties.'

She bow'd as if to veil a noble tear;
And up we came to where the river
sloped
To plunge in cataract, shattering on
black blocks
A breadth of thunder. O'er it shook
the woods,
And danced the color, and, below,
stuck out
The bones of some vast bulk that
lived and roar'd
Before man was. She gazed awhile
and said,
'As these rude bones to us, are we to
her
That will be.' 'Dare we dream of
that,' I ask'd,
'Which wrought us, as the workman
and his work,
That practice betters?' 'How,' she
cried, 'you love

The metaphysics! read and earn our
prize,
A golden brooch: beneath an emerald
plane
Sits Diotima, teaching him that died
Of hemlock; our device; wrought to
the life;
She rapt upon her subject, he on her:
For there are schools for all.' 'And
yet' I said
'Methinks I have not found among
them all
One anatomic.' 'Nay, we thought of
that,'
She answer'd, 'but it pleased us not:
in truth
We shudder but to dream our maids
should ape
Those monstrous males that carve the
living hound,
And cram him with the fragments of
the grave,
Or in the dark dissolving human
heart,
And holy secrets of this microcosm,
Dabbling a shameless hand with
shameful jest,
Encarnalize their spirits: yet we know
Knowledge is knowledge, and this
matter hangs:
Howbeit ourself, foreseeing casualty,
Nor willing men should come among
us, learnt,
For many weary moons before we
came,
This craft of healing. Were you sick,
ourself
Would tend upon you. To your ques-
tion now,
Which touches on the workman and
his work.
Let there be light and there was
light: 'tis so:
For was, and is, and will be, are but
is;
And all creation is one act at once,
The birth of light: but we that are not
all,
As parts, can see but parts, now this,
now that,
And live, perforce, from thought to
thought, and make
One act a phantom of succession: thus

Our weakness somehow shapes the
shadow, 'Time ;
But in the shadow will we work, and
mould
The woman to the fuller day.'

She spake
With kindled eyes : we rode a league
beyond,
And, o'er a bridge of pinewood cross-
ing, came
On flowery levels underneath the
crag,
Full of all beauty. 'O how sweet' I
said

(For I was half-oblivious of my mask)
'To linger here with one that loved
us.' 'Yea,'

The answer'd, 'or with fair philoso-
phies

That lift the fancy ; for indeed these
fields

Are lovely, lovelier not the Elysian
lawns,

Where paced the Demigods of old,
and saw

The soft white vapor streak the
crowned towers

Built to the Sun : ' then, turning to her
maids,

'Pitch our pavilion here upon the
sward ;

Lay out the viands.' At the word,
they raised

A tent of satin, elaborately wrought
With fair Corinna's triumph ; here she
stood,

Engirt with many a florid maiden-
check,

The woman-conqueror ; woman-con-
quer'd there

The bearded Victor of ten thousand
hymns,

And all the men mourn'd at his side :
but we

Set forth to climb ; then, climbing,
Cyril kept

With Psyche, with Melissa Florian, I
With mine affianced. Many a little
hand

Glanced like a touch of sunshine on
the rocks,

Many a light foot shone like a jewel
set

In the dark crag : and then we turn'd,
we wound

About the cliffs, the copses, out and
in,

Hammering and clinking, chattering
stony names

Of shale and hornblende, rag and trap
and tuff,

Amygdaloid and trachyte, till the
Sun

Grew broader toward his death and
fell, and all

The rosy heights came out above the
lawns.

IV.

The splendor falls on castle walls

And snowy summits old in story :

The long light shakes across the lakes,

And the wild cataract leaps in glory.

Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes fly-
ing,

Blow, bugle ; answer, echoes, dying, dy-
ing, dying.

O hark, O hear ! how thin and clear,

And thinner, clearer, farther going !

O sweet and far from cliff and scar

The horns of Elfland faintly blowing !

Blow, let us hear the purple glens reply-
ing :

Blow, bugle ; answer, echoes, dying, dying,
dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,

They faint on hill or field or river :

Our echoes roll from soul to soul,

And grow for ever and for ever.

Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes fly-
ing,

And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying,
dying.

'There sinks the nebulous star we call
the Sun,

If that hypothesis of theirs be sound '

Said Ida ; ' Let us down and rest ; '
and we

Down from the lean and wrinkled
precipices,

By every coppice-feather'd chasm and
cleft,

Dropt through the ambrosial gloom to
where below
No bigger than a glow-worm shone
the tent
Lamp-lit from the inner. Once she
lean'd on me,
Descending; once or twice she lent
her hand,
And blissful palpitations in the blood,
Stirring a sudden transport rose and
fell.

But when we planted level feet, and
dipt
Beneath the satin dome and enter'd in,
There leaning deep in broider'd down
we sank
Our elbows: on a tripod in the midst
A fragrant flame rose, and before us
glow'd
Fruit, blossom, viand, amber wine,
and gold.

Then she, 'Let some one sing to us:
lightlier move
The minutes fledged with music:' and
a maid,
Of those beside her, smote her harp,
and sang.

'Tears, idle tears, I know not what they
mean,
Tears from the depth of some divine de-
spair
Rise in the heart and gather to the eyes.
In looking on the happy Autumn-fields,
And thinking of the days that are no more.

'Fresh as the first beam glittering on a
sail,
That brings our friends up from the under-
world,
Sad as the last which reddens over one
That sinks with all we love below the
verge;
So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

'Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer
dawns
The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd birds
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes
The casement slowly grows a glimmering
square;

So sad, so strange, the days that are no
more.

'Dear as remember'd kisses after death,
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy
feign'd

On lips that are for others; deep as love,
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret;
O Death in Life, the days that are no more.'

She ended with such passion that
the tear,
She sang of, shook and fell, an err-
ing pearl
Lost in her bosom: but with some
disdain
Answer'd the Princess, 'If indeed
there haunt
About the moulder'd lodges of the
Past
So sweet a voice and vague, fatal to
men,

Well needs it we should cram our ears
with wool
And so pace by: but thine are fancies
hatch'd
In silken-folded idleness; nor is it
Wiser to weep a true occasion lost,
But trim our sails, and let old bygones
be,

While down the streams that float us
each and all
To the issue, goes, like glittering bergs
of ice,
Throne after throne, and molten on
the waste
Becomes a cloud: for all things serve
their time

Toward that great year of equal
mights and rights,
Nor would I fight with iron laws, in
the end
Found golden: let the past be past;
let be

Their cancell'd Babels: tho' the
rough kex break
The starr'd mosaic, and the beard-
blown goat

Hang on the shaft, and the wild fig-
tree split

Their monstrous idols, care not while
we hear

A trumpet in the distance pealing
 news
 Or better, and Hope, a poising eagle,
 burns
 Above the unrisen morrow: ' then to
 me;
 'Know you no song of your own land,'
 she said,
 'Not such as moans about the retro-
 spect,
 But deals with the other distance and
 the hues
 Of promise; not a death's-head at the
 wine.'

Then I remember'd one myself had
 made,
 What time I watch'd the swallow
 winging south
 From mine own land, part made long
 since, and part
 Now while I sang, and maidenlike as far
 As I could ape their treble, did I sing.

'O Swallow, Swallow, flying, flying
 South,
 Fly to her, and fall upon her gilded eaves,
 And tell her, tell her, what I tell to thee.

'O tell her, Swallow, thou that knowest
 each,
 That bright and fierce and fickle is the
 South,
 And dark and true and tender is the North.

'O Swallow, Swallow, if I could follow,
 and light
 Upon her lattice, I would pipe and trill,
 And cheep and twitter twenty million loves.

'O were I thou that she might take me
 in,
 And lay me on her bosom, and her heart
 Would rock the snowy cradle till I died.

'Why lingereth she to clothe her heart
 with love,
 Delaying as the tender ash delays
 To clothe herself, when all the woods are
 green?

'O tell her, Swallow, that thy brood is
 flown:
 Say to her, I do but wanton in the South,
 But in the North long since my nest is
 made.

'O tell her, brief is life but love is long,
 And brief the sun of summer in the North,
 And brief the moon of beauty in the South.

'O Swallow, flying from the golden
 woods,
 Fly to her, and pipe and woo her, and
 make her mine,
 And tell her, tell her, that I follow thee.'

I ceased, and all the ladies, each
 at each,
 Like the Ithacensian suitors in old
 time,
 Stared with great eyes, and laugh'd
 with alien lips,
 And knew not what they meant; for
 still my voice
 Rang false: but smiling 'Not for
 thee,' she said,
 'O Bulbul, any rose of Gulistan
 Shall burst her veil: marsh-divers,
 rather, maid,
 Shall croak thee sister, or the meadow-
 crake
 Grate her harsh kindred in the grass:
 and this

A mere love-poem! O for such, my
 friend,

We hold them slight: they mind us
 of the time

When we made bricks in Egypt.
 Knaves are men,

That lute and flute fantastic tender-
 ness,

And dress the victim to the offering
 up.

And paint the gates of Hell with
 Paradise,

And play the slave to gain the tyr-
 anny.

Poor soul! I had a maid of honor
 once;

She wept her true eyes blind for such
 a one,

A rogue of canzonets and serenades.
 I loved her. Peace be with her. She

is dead.

So they blaspheme the muse! But
 great is song

Used to great ends: ourself have
 often tried

Valkyrian hymns, or into rhythm have
 dash'd

The passion of the prophethess; for
 song
 Is duer unto freedom, force and
 growth
 Of spirit than to junketing and love.
 Love is it? Would this same mock-
 love, and this
 Mock-Hymen were laid up like winter
 bats,
 Till all men grew to rate us at our
 worth,
 Not vassals to be beat, nor pretty
 babes
 To be dandled, no, but living wills,
 and sphered
 Whole in ourselves and owed to none.
 Enough!
 But now to leaven play with profit,
 you,
 * Know you no song, the true growth of
 your soil,
 That gives the manners of your coun-
 try-women?'

She spoke and turn'd her sumptu-
 ous head with eyes
 Of shining expectation fixt on mine.
 Then while I dragg'd my brains for
 such a song,
 Cyril, with whom the bell-mouth'd
 glass had wrought,
 Or master'd by the sense of sport,
 began
 To troll a careless, careless tavern-
 catch
 Of Moll and Meg, and strange experi-
 ences
 Unmeet for ladies. Florian nodded
 at him,
 I frowning; Psyche flush'd and
 wann'd and shook;
 The lilylike Melissa droop'd her
 brows;
 'Forbear,' the Princess cried; 'For-
 bear, Sir' I;
 And heated thro' and thro' with
 wrath and love,
 I smote him on the breast; he started
 up;
 There rose a shriek as of a city
 sack'd;
 Melissa clamor'd 'Flee the death;'
 'To horse'

Said Ida; 'home! to horse!' and
 fled, as flies
 A troop of snowy doves athwart the
 dusk,
 When some one batters at the dove-
 cote-doors,
 Disorderly the women. Alone I
 stood
 With Florian, cursing Cyril, vext at
 heart,
 In the pavilion: there like parting
 hopes
 I heard them passing from me: hoof
 by hoof,
 And every hoof a knell to my desire-,
 Clang'd on the bridge; and then
 another shriek,
 'The Head, the Head, the Princess,
 O the Head!'
 For blind with rage she miss'd the
 plank, and roll'd
 In the river. Out I sprang from
 glow to gloom:
 There whirl'd her white robe like a
 blossom'd branch
 Rapt to the horrible fall: a glance I
 gave,
 No more; but woman vested as I was
 Plunged; and the flood drew; yet I
 caught her; then
 Oaring one arm and bearing in my
 left
 The weight of all the hopes of half
 the world,
 Strove to buffet to land in vain. A
 tree
 Was half-disrooted from his place and
 stoop'd
 To drench his dark locks in the gur-
 gling wave
 Mid-channel. Right on this we drove
 and caught,
 And grasping down the boughs I
 gain'd the shore.

There stood her maidens glimmer-
 ingly group'd
 In the hollow bank. One reaching
 forward drew
 My burthen from mine arms; they
 cried 'she lives.'
 They bore her back into the tent: but
 I,

So much a kind of shame within me wrought,
 Not yet endured to meet her opening eyes,
 Nor found my friends; but push'd alone on foot
 (For since her horse was lost I left her mine)
 Across the woods, and less from Indian craft
 Than beelike instinct hiveward, found at length
 The garden portals. Two great statues, Art
 And Science, Caryatids, lifted up
 A weight of emblem, and betwixt were valves
 Of open-work in which the hunter rued
 His rash intrusion, manlike, but his brows
 Had sprouted, and the branches there-upon
 Spread out at top, and grimly spiked the gates.

A little space was left between the horns,
 Thro' which I clamber'd o'er at top with pain,
 Dropt on the sward, and up the linden walks,
 And, tost on thoughts that changed from hue to hue,
 Now poring on the glowworm, now the star,
 I paced the terrace, till the Bear had wheel'd
 Thro' a great arc his seven slow suns. A step
 Of lightest echo, then a loftier form
 Than female, moving thro' the uncertain gloom,
 Disturb'd me with the doubt 'if this were she,'
 But it was Florian. 'Hist O Hist,' he said,
 'They seek us: out so late is out of rules.
 Moreover 'seize the strangers' is the cry.
 How came you here?' I told him: 'I' said he,

'Last of the train, a moral leper, I,
 To whom none spake, half-sick at heart, return'd.
 Arriving all confused among the rest
 With hooded brows I crept into the hall,
 And, couch'd behind a Judith, underneath
 The head of Holoernes peep'd and saw.
 Girl after girl was call'd to trial: each
 Disclaim'd all knowledge of us: last of all,
 Melissa: trust me, Sir, I pitied her.
 She, question'd if she knew us men, at first
 Was silent; closer prest, denied it not:
 And then, demanded if her mother knew,
 Or Psyche, she affirm'd not, or denied:
 From whence the Royal mind, familiar with her,
 Easily gather'd either guilt. She sent
 For Psyche, but she was not there; she call'd
 For Psyche's child to cast it from the doors;
 She sent for Blanche to accuse her face to face;
 And I slipt out; but whither will you now?
 And where are Psyche, Cyril? both are fled;
 What, if together? that were not so well.
 Would rather we had never come! I dread
 His wildness, and the chances of the dark.'

'And yet,' I said, 'you wrong him more than I
 That struck him: this is proper to the clown,
 Tho' smock'd, or furr'd and purpled, still the clown,
 To harm the thing that trusts him, and to shame
 That which he says he loves: for Cyril, howe'er
 He deal in frolic, as to-night—the song
 Might have been worse and sinn'd in grosser lips

Beyond all pardon—as it is, I hold
These flashes on the surface are not he.
He has a solid base of temperament:
But as the waterlily starts and slides
Upon the level in little puffs of wind,
Tho' anchor'd to the bottom, such is
he.'

Scarce had I ceased when from a
tamarisk near
Two Proctors leapt upon us, crying,
'Names:.'
He, standing still, was clutch'd; but
I began
To thrid the musky-circled mazes,
wind
And double in and out the boles, and
race
By all the fountains: fleet I was of
foot:
Before me shower'd the rose in
flakes; behind
I heard the puff'd pursuer; at mine
ear
Bubbled the nightingale and heeded
not,
And secret laughter tickled all my
soul.
At last I hook'd my ankle in a vine,
That claspt the feet of a Mnemosyne,
And falling on my face was caught
and known.

They haled us to the Princess where
she sat
High in the hall: above her droop'd
a lamp,
And made the single jewel on her
brow
Burn like the mystic fire on a mast-
head,
Prophet of storm: a handmaid on each
side
Bow'd toward her, combing out her
long black hair
Damp from the river; and close
behind her stood
Eight daughters of the plough,
stronger than men,
Ifuge women blowzed with health,
and wind, and rain,
And labor. Each was like a Druid
rock;

Or like a spire of land that stands
apart
Cleft from the main, and wait'd about
with mews.

Then, as we came, the crowd divid-
ing clove
An advent to the throne: and therebe-
side,
Half-naked as if caught at once from
bed
And tumbled on the purple footcloth,
lay
The lily-shining child; and on the
left,
Bow'd on her palms and folded up
from wrong,
Her round white shoulder shaken with
her sobs,
Melissa knelt; but Lady Blanche
erect
Stood up and spake, an affluent orator.

'It was not thus, O Princess, in old
days:
You prized my counsel, lived upon
my lips:
I led you then to all the Castalies;
I fed you with the milk of every Muse;
I loved you like this kneeler, and you
me
Your second mother: those were
gracious times.
Then came your new friend: you
began to change—
I saw it and grieved—to slacken and
to cool;
Till taken with her seeming openness
You turn'd your warmer currents all
to her,
To me you froze: this was my meed
for all.
Yet I bore up in part from ancient
love,
And partly that I hoped to win you
back,
And partly conscious of my own
deserts,
And partly that you were my civil head,
And chiefly you were born for some-
thing great,
In which I might your fellow-worker
be,

When time should serve ; and thus a noble scheme
 Grew up from seed we two long since had sown ;
 In us true growth, in her a Jonah's gourd,
 Up in one night and due to sudden sun:
 We took this palace ; but even from the first
 You stood in your own light and darken'd mine.
 What student came but that you planed her path
 To Lady Psyche, younger, not so wise,
 A foreigner, and I your countrywoman,
 I your old friend and tried, she new in all ?
 But still her lists were swell'd and mine were lean ;
 Yet I bore up in hope she would be known :
 Then came these wolves : *they* knew her : *they* endured,
 Long-closeted with her the yesternorn,
 To tell her what they were, and she to hear :
 And me none told : not less to an eye like mine
 A lidless watcher of the public weal,
 Last night, their mask was patent, and my foot
 Was to you : but I thought again : I fear'd
 To meet a cold " We thank you, we shall hear of it
 From Lady Psyche : " you had gone to her,
 She told, perforce ; and winning easy grace,
 No doubt, for slight delay, remain'd among us
 In our young nursery still unknown, the stem
 Less grain than touchwood, while my honest heat
 Were all miscounted as malignant haste
 To push my rival out of place and power.
 But public use required she should be known ;
 And since my oath was ta'en for public use,

I broke the letter of it to keep the sense.
 I spoke not then at first, but watch'd them well,
 Saw that they kept apart, no mischief done ;
 And yet this day (tho' you should hate me for it)
 I came to tell you ; found that you had gone,
 Ridd'n to the hills, she likewise : now, I thought,
 That surely she will speak ; if not, then I :
 Did she ? These monsters blazon'd what they were,
 According to the coarseness of their kind,
 For thus I hear ; and known at last (my work)
 And full of cowardice and guilty shame,
 I grant in her some sense of shame, she flies ;
 And I remain on whom to wreak your rage,
 I, that have lent my life to build up yours,
 I that have wasted here health, wealth, and time,
 And talent, I—you know it—I will not boast :
 Dismiss me, and I prophesy your plan,
 Divorced from my experience, will be chaff
 For every gust of chance, and men will say
 We did not know the real light, but chased
 The wisp that flickers where no foot can tread.'

She ceased : the Princess answer'd coldly, ' Good :
 Your oath is broken : we dismiss you : go.
 For this lost lamb (she pointed to the child)
 Our mind is changed : we take it to ourself.'

Thereat the Lady stretch'd a vulture throat,

And shot from crooked lips a haggard smile.

'The plan was mine. I built the nest'
she said

'To hatch the cuckoo. Rise!' and stoop'd to updrag

Melissa: she, half on her mother propt,

Half-drooping from her, turn'd her face, and cast

A liquid look on Ida, full of prayer,
Which melted Florian's fancy as she hung.

A Niobéan daughter, one arm out,
Appealing to the bolts of Heaven;
and while

We gazed upon her came a little stir
About the doors, and on a sudden rush'd

Among us, out of breath, as one pursued,

A woman-post in flying raiment.
Fear

Stared in her eyes, and chalk'd her face, and wing'd

Her transit to the throne, whereby she fell

Delivering seal'd dispatches which the Head

Took half-amazed, and in her lion's mood

Tore open, silent we with blind surmise

Regarding, while she read, till over brow

And cheek and bosom brake the wrathful bloom

As of some fire against a stormy cloud,
When the wild peasant rights himself,
the rick

Flames, and his anger reddens in the heavens;

For anger most it seem'd, while now her breast,

Beaten with some great passion at her heart,

Palpitated, her hand shook, and we heard

In the dead hush the papers that she held

Rustle: at once the lost lamb at her feet

Sent out a bitter bleating for its dam;

The plaintive cry jarr'd on her ire; she crush'd

The scrolls together, made a sudden turn

As if to speak, but, utterance failing her,

She whirl'd them on to me, as who should say

'Read,' and I read—two letters—one her sire's.

'Fair daughter, when we sent the Prince your way

We knew not your ungracious laws,
which learnt,

We, conscious of what temper you are built,

Came all in haste to hinder wrong,
but fell

Into his father's hands, who has this night,

You lying close upon his territory,
Slipt round and in the dark invested you,

And here he keeps me hostage for his son.'

The second was my father's running thus:

'You have our son: touch not a hair of his head:

Render him up unscathed: give him your hand:

Cleave to your contract: tho' indeed we hear

You hold the woman is the better man;

A rampant heresy, such as if it spread
Would make all women kick against their Lords

Thro' all the world, and which might well deserve

That we this night should pluck your palace down;

And we will do it, unless you send us back

Our son, on the instant, whole.'

So far I read;
And then stood up and spoke impetuously.

'O not to pry and peer on your reserve,

But led by golden wishes, and a hope
The child of regal compact, did I
break

Your precinct; not a scorner of your sex
But venerator, zealous it should be
All that it might be: hear me, for I
bear,

Tho' man, yet human, whatsoe'er your
wrongs,
From the flaxen curl to the gray lock
a life

Less mine than yours: my nurse
would tell me of you;
I babbled for you, as babies for the
moon,

Vague brightness; when a boy, you
stoop'd to me
From all high places, lived in all fair
lights,

Came in long breezes rapt from
inmost south

And blown to inmost north; at eve
and dawn

With Ida, Ida, rang the woods;
The leader wildswan in among the
stars

Would clang it, and lapt in wreaths of
glowworm light

The mellow breaker murmur'd Ida.
Now,

Because I would have reach'd you,
had you been
Sphered up with Cassiopëia, or the
enthroned

Persephonë in Hades, now at length,
Those winters of abeyance all worn
out,

A man I came to see you: but, indeed,
Not in this frequency can I lend full
tongue,

O noble Ida, to those thoughts that
wait

On you, their centre: let me say but
this,

That many a famous man and woman,
town

And landskip, have I heard of, after
seen

The dwarfs of presage: tho' when
known, there grew

Another kind of beauty in detail
Made them worth knowing; but in
you I found

My boyish dream involved and daz-
zled down

And master'd, while that after-beauty
makes

Such head from act to act, from hour
to hour,

Within me, that except you slay me
here,

According to your bitter statute-book,
I cannot cease to follow you, as they
say

The seal does music; who desire you
more

Than growing boys their manhood;
dying lips,

With many thousand matters left to
do,

The breath of life; O more than poor
men wealth,

Than sick men health—yours, yours,
not mine—but half

Without you; with you, whole; and
of those halves

You worthiest; and howe'er you
block and bar

Your heart with system out from
mine, I hold

That it becomes no man to nurse
despair,

But in the teeth of clench'd antago-
nisms

To follow up the worthiest till he die:
Yet that I came not all unauthorized
Behold your father's letter.'

On one knee
Kneeling, I gave it, which she caught,
And dash'd

Unopen'd at her feet: a tide of fierce
Invective seem'd to wait behind her
lips,

As waits a river level with the dam
Ready to burst and flood the world
with foam:

And so she would have spoken, but
there rose

A hubbub in the court of half the
maids

Gather'd together: from the illumined
hall

Long lanes of splendor slanted o'er a
press

Of snowy shoulders, thick as herded
ewes,

And rainbow robes, and gems and
gemlike eyes,
And gold and golden heads; they to
and fro
Fluctuated, as flowers in storm, some
red, some pale,
All open-mouth'd, all gazing to the
light,
Some crying there was an army in the
land,
And some that men were in the very
walls,
And some they cared not; till a
clamor grew
As of a new-world Babel, woman-built,
And worse-confounded: high above
them stood
The placid marble Muses, looking
peace.

Not peace she look'd, the Head: but
rising up
Robed in the long night of her deep
hair, so
To the open window moved, remaining
there
Fixt like a beacon-tower above the
waves
Of tempest, when the crimson-rolling
eye
Glared ruin, and the wild birds on the
light
Dash themselves dead. She stretch'd
her arms and call'd
Across the tumult and the tumult fell.

'What fear ye, brawlers? am not I
your Head?
On me, me, me, the storm first breaks:
I dare
All these male thunderbolts: what is
it ye fear?
Peace! there are those to avenge us
and they come:
If not,—myself were like enough, O
girls,
To unfurl the maiden banner of our
rights,
And clad in iron burst the ranks of
war,
Or, falling, protomartyr of our cause,
Die: yet I blame you not so much for
fear;

Six thousand years of fear have made
you that
From which I would redeem you: but
for those
That stir this hubbub—you and you
—I know
Your faces there in the crowd—to-mor-
row morn
We hold a great convention: then
shall they
That love their voices more than duty,
learn
With whom they deal, dismiss'd in
shame to live
No wiser than their mothers, house-
hold stuff,
Live chattels, mincers of each other's
fame,
Full of weak poison, turnspits for the
clown,
The drunkard's football, laughing-
stocks of Time,
Whose brains are in their hands and
in their heels,
But fit to flaunt, to dress, to dance, to
thrum,
To tramp, to scream, to burnish, and
to scour,
For ever slaves at home and fools
abroad.'

She ending, waved her hands: there-
at the crowd
Muttering, dissolved: then with a
smile, that look'd
A stroke of cruel sunshine on the cliff,
When all the glens are drown'd in
azure gloom
Of thunder-shower, she floated to us
and said:

'You have done well and like a
gentleman,
And like a prince: you have our
thanks for all:
And you look well too in your woman's
dress:
Well have you done and like a gentle-
man.
You saved our life: we owe you
bitter thanks:
Better have died and spilt our bones
in the flood—

Then men had said—but now—What
hinders me
To take such bloody vengeance on you
both ?

Yet since our father—Wasps in our
good hive,
You would-be quenchers of the light
to be,

Barbarians, grosser than your native
bears—

O would I had his sceptre for one
hour !

You that have dared to break our
bound, and gull'd

Our servants, wrong'd and lied and
thwarted us—

I wed with thee ! I bound by precon-
tract

Your bride, your bonds slave ! not tho'
all the gold

That veins the world were pack'd to
make your crown,

And every spoken tongue should lord
you. Sir,

Your falsehood and yourself are hate-
ful to us :

I trample on your offers and on you :
Begone : we will not look upon you
more.

Here, push them out at gates.'

In wrath she spake,

Then those eight mighty daughters of
the plough

Bent their broad faces toward us and
address'd

Their motion : twice I sought to plead
my cause,

But on my shoulder hung their heavy
hands,

The weight of destiny : so from her face
They pushed us, down the steps, and

thro' the court,

And with grim laughter thrust us out
at gates.

We cross'd the street and gain'd a
petty mound

Beyond it, whence we saw the lights
and heard

The voices murmuring. While I
listen'd, came

On a sudden the weird seizure and the
doubt :

I seem'd to move among a world of
ghosts ;

The Princess with her monstrous
woman-guard,

The jest and earnest working side by
side,

The cataract and the tumult and the
kings

Were shadows ; and the long fantastic
night

With all its doings had and had not
been,

And all things were and were not.

This went by
As strangely as it came, and on my
spirits

Settled a gentle cloud of melancholy ;
Not long ; I shook it off ; for spite of
doubts

And sudden ghostly shadowings I was
one

To whom the touch of all mischance
but came

As night to him that sitting on a hill
Sees the midsummer, midnight, Nor-
way sun

Set into sunrise ; then we moved
away.

Thy voice is heard thro' rolling drums,

That beat to battle where he stands ;

Thy face across his fancy comes,

And gives the battle to his hands :

A moment, while the trumpets blow,

He sees his brood about thy knee ;

The next, like fire he meets the foe,

And strikes him dead for thine and thee.

So Lilia sang : we thought her half-
possess'd,

She struck such warbling fury thro'
the words ;

And, after, feigning pique at what she
call'd

The raillery, or grotesque, or false
sublime—

Like one that wishes at a dance to
change

The music—clapt her hands and cried
for war,

Or some grand fight to kill and make
an end :

And he that next inherited the tale

Half turning to the broken statue,
said,
'Sir Ralph has got your colors: if I
prove
Your knight, and fight your battle,
what for me?'
It chanced, her empty glove upon the
tomb
Lay by her like a model of her hand.
She took it and she flung it. 'Fight,'
she said,
'And make us all we would be, great
and good.'
He knightlike in his cap instead of
casque,
A cap of Tyrol borrow'd from the
hall,
Arranged the favor, and assumed the
Prince.

v.

Now, scarce three paces measured
from the mound,
We stumbled on a stationary voice,
And 'Stand, who goes?' 'Two from
the palace' I.
'The second two: they wait,' he said,
'pass on;
His Highness wakes:' and one, that
clash'd in arms,
By glimmering lanes and walls of can-
vas led
Threading the soldier-city, till we
heard
The drowsy folds of our great ensign
shake
From blazon'd lions o'er the imperial
tent
Whispers of war.
Entering, the sudden light
Dazed me half-blind: I stood and
seem'd to hear,
As in a poplar grove when a light
wind wakes
A lisping of the innumerable leaf and
dies,
Each hissing in his neighbor's ear;
and then
A strangled titter, out of which there
broke
On all sides, clamoring etiquette to
death,

Unmeasured mirth; while now the
two old kings
Began to wag their baldness up and
down,
The fresh young captains flash'd their
glittering teeth,
The huge bush-bearded Barons heaved
and blew,
And slain with laughter roll'd the
gilded Squire.

At length my Sire, his rough cheek
wet with tears,
Panted from weary sides 'King, you
are free!
We did but keep you surety for our
son,
If this be he,—or a draggled mawkin,
thou,
That tends her bristled grunters in the
sludge:'
For I was drench'd with ooze and
torn with briers,
More crumpled than a poppy from the
sheath,
And all one rag, disprinc'd from head
to heel.
Then some one sent beneath his
vaulted palm
A whisper'd jest to some one near
him, 'Look,
He has been among his shadows.'
'Satan take
The old women and their shadows!
(thus the King
Roar'd) make yourself a man to fight
with men.
Go: Cyril told us all.'

As boys that slink
From ferule and the trespass-chiding
eye,
Away we stole, and transient in a trice
From what was left of faded woman-
slough
To sheathing splendors and the golden
scale
Of harness, issued in the sun, that
now
Leapt from the dewy shoulders of the
Earth,
And hit the Northern hills. Here
Cyril met us.
A little shy at first, but by and by

We twain, with mutual pardon ask'd
 and given
 For stroke and song, resolder'd peace,
 whereon
 Follow'd his tale. Amazed he fled
 away
 Thro' the dark land, and later in the
 night
 Had come on Pysche weeping : ' then
 we fell
 Into your father's hand, and there she
 lies,
 But will not speak, nor stir.'

He show'd a tent
 A stone-shot off : we enter'd in, and
 there
 Among piled arms and rough accou-
 trements,
 Pitiful sight, wrapp'd in a soldier's
 cloak,
 Like some sweet sculpture draped
 from head to foot,
 And push'd by rude hands from its
 pedestal,
 All her fair length upon the ground
 she lay :
 And at her head a follower of the
 camp,
 A charr'd and wrinkled piece of
 womanhood,
 Sat watching like a watcher by the
 dead.

. Then Florian knelt, and 'Come' he
 whisper'd to her,
 'Lift up your head, sweet sister : lie
 not thus.
 What have you done but right? you
 could not slay
 Me, nor your prince : look up : be
 comforted :
 Sweet is it to have done the thing one
 ought,
 When fall'n in darker ways.' And
 likewise I :
 'Be comforted : have I not lost her
 too,
 In whose least act abides the name-
 less charm
 That none has else for me?' She
 heard, she moved,
 She moan'd, a folded voice ; and up
 she sat,

And raised the cloak from brows as
 pale and smooth
 As those that mourn half-shrouded
 over death
 In deathless marble. 'Her,' she said,
 'my friend—
 Parted from her—betray'd her cause
 and mine—
 Where shall I breathe? why kept ye
 not your faith?
 O base and bad! what comfort? none
 for me!'

To whom remorseful Cyril, 'Yet I
 pray
 Take comfort : live, dear lady, for
 your child !'
 At which she lifted up her voice and
 cried.

'Ah nie, my babe, my blossom, ah,
 my child,
 My one sweet child, whom I shall see
 no more !

For now will cruel Ida keep her back ;
 And either she will die for want of
 care,

Or sicken with ill-usage, when they say
 The child is hers—for every little fault,
 The child is hers ; and they will beat
 my girl

Remembering her mother : O my
 flower !

Or they will take her, they will make
 her hard,

And she will pass me by in after-life
 With some cold reverence worse than
 were she dead.

Ill mother that I was to leave her
 there,

To lag behind, scared by the cry they
 made,

The horror of the shame among them
 all :

But I will go and sit beside the doors,
 And make a wild petition night and
 day,

Until they hate to hear me like a wind
 Wailing forever, till they open to me,
 And lay my little blossom at my feet,
 My babe, my sweet Aglaia, my one
 child :

And I will take her up and go my
 way,

And satisfy my soul with kissing her :

Ah ! what might that man not deserve
of me
Who gave me back my child ? ' ' Be
comforted,'
Said Cyril, 'you shall have it:' but
again
She veil'd her brows, and prone she
sank, and so
Like tender things that being caught
feign death,
Spoke not, nor stirr'd.

By this a murmur ran
Thro' all the camp and inward raced
the scouts
With rumor of Prince Arac hard at
hand.

We left her by the woman, and without
Found the gray kings at parle: and
' Look you ' cried

My father 'that our compact be ful-
fill'd :

You have spoilt this child; she laughs
at you and man :

She wrongs herself, her sex, and me,
and him :

But red-faced war has rods of steel and
fire ;

She yields, or war.'

Then Gama turn'd to me :
' We fear, indeed, you spent a stormy
time

With our strange girl : and yet they
say that still

You love her. Give us, then, your
mind at large :

How say you, war or not ? '

' Not war, if possible,
O king,' I said, 'lest from the abuse of
war,

The desecrated shrine, the trampled
year,

The smouldering homestead, and the
household flower

Torn from the lintel—all the common
wrong—

A smoke go up thro' which I loom to
her

Three times a monster: now she
lightens scorn

At him that mars her plan, but then
would hate

(And every voice she talk'd with ratify
it,

And every face she look'd on justify it)
The general foe. More soluble is this
knot,

By gentleness than war. I want her
love.

What were I nigher this altho' we
dash'd

Your cities into shards with catapults,
She would not love ;—or brought her

chain'd, a slave,
The lifting of whose eyelash is my

lord,
Not ever would she love; but brood-
ing turn

The book of scorn, till all my flitting
chance

Were caught within the record of her
wrongs,

And crush'd to death: and rather, Sire,
than this

I would the old God of war himself
were dead,

Forgotten, rusting on his iron hills,
Rotting on some wild shore with ribs

of wreck,
Or like an old-world mammoth bulk'd

in ice,
Not to be molten out.'

And roughly spake
My father, ' Tut, you know them not,

the girls.
Boy, when I hear you prate I almost

think
That idiot legend credible. Look you,

Sir !
Man is the hunter; woman is his

game :
The sleek and shining creatures of the

chase,
We hunt them for the beauty of their

skins ;
They love us for it, and we ride them

down.
Wheedling and siding with them !

Out ! for shame !
Boy, there's no rose that's half so dear

to them
As he that does the thing they dare

not do,
Breathing and sounding beauteous

battle, comes
With the air of the trumpet round

him, and leaps in

Among the women, snares them by the
score
Flatter'd and fluster'd, wins, tho'
dash'd with death
He reddens what he kisses: thus I
won
Your mother, a good mother, a good
wife,
Worth winning; but this firebrand—
gentleness
To such as her! if Cyril spake her
true,
To catch a dragon in a cherry net,
To trip a tigress with a gossamer,
Were wisdom to it.
‘Yea but Sire,’ I cried,
‘Wild natures need wise curbs. The
soldier? No:
What dares not Ida do that she should
prize
The soldier? I beheld her, when she
rose
The yesternight, and storming in
extremes,
Stood for her cause, and flung defiance
down
Gagelike to man, and had not shunn'd
the death,
No, not the soldier’s: yet I hold her,
king,
True woman: but you clash them all
in one.
That have as many differences as we.
The violet varies from the lily as far
As oak from elm: one loves the
soldier, one
The silken priest of peace, one this,
one that,
And some unworthily; their sinless
faith,
A maiden moon that sparkles on a sty,
Glorifying clown and satyr; whence
they need
More breadth of culture: is not Ida
right?
They worth it? truer to the law within?
Severer in the logic of a life?
Twice as magnetic to sweet influences
Of earth and heaven? and she of
whom you speak,
My mother, looks as whole as some
serene
Creation minted in the golden moods

Of sovereign artists; not a thought, a
touch,
But pure as lines of green that streak
the white
Of the first snowdrop’s inner leaves; I
say,
Not like the piebald miscellany man,
Bursts of great heart and slips in
sensual mire,
But whole and one: and take them
all-in-all,
Were we ourselves but half as good,
as kind,
As truthful, much that Ida claims as
right
Had ne’er been mooted, but as frankly
theirs
As dues of Nature. To our point: not
war:
Lest I lose all.’
‘Nay, nay, you spake but sense’
Said Gama. ‘We remember love
ourselves
In our sweet youth; we did not rate
him then
This red-hot iron to be shaped with
blows.
You talk almost like Ida: *she* can
talk;
And there is something in it as you
say:
But you talk kindlier: we esteem you
for it.—
He seems a gracious and a gallant
Prince,
I would he had our daughter: for the
rest,
Our own detention, why, the causes
weigh’d,—
Fatherly fears—you used us cour-
teously—
We would do much to gratify your
Prince—
We pardon it; and for your ingress
here
Upon the skirt and fringe of our fair
land,
You did but come as goblins in the
night,
Nor in the furrow broke the plough-
man’s head,
Nor burnt the grange, nor buss’d the
milking-maid,

Nor robb'd the farmer of his bowl of
cream:
But let your Prince (our royal word
upon it,
He comes back safe) ride with us to
our lines,
And speak with Arac: Arac's word is
thrice
As ours with Ida: something may be
done—
I know not what—and ours shall see
us friends.
You, likewise, our late guests, if so
you will,
Follow us: who knows? we four may
build some plan
Foursquare to opposition.'

Here he reach'd
White hands of farewell to my sire,
who growl'd
An answer which, half-muffled in his
beard.
Let so much out as gave us leave to
go.

Then rode we with the old king
across the lawns
Beneath huge trees, a thousand rings
of Spring
In every bole, a song on every spray
Of birds that piped their Valentines,
and woke
Desire in me to infuse my tale of love
In the old king's ears, who promised
help, and oozed
All o'er with honey'd answer as we
rode
And blossom-fragrant slipt the heavy
dews
Gather'd by night and peace, with
each light air
On our mail'd heads: but other
thoughts than Peace
Burnt in us, when we saw the embat-
tled squares,
And squadrons of the Prince, tramp-
ling the flowers
With clamor: for among them rose a
cry
As if to greet the king; they made a
halt;
The horses yell'd; they clash'd their
arms; the drum

Beat; merrily-blowing shrill'd the
martial life;
And in the blast and bray of the long
horn
And serpent-throated bugle, undu-
lated
The banner: anon to meet us lightly
pranced
Three captains out: nor ever had I
seen
Such thews of men: the midmost and
the highest
Was Arac: all about his motion
clung
The shadow of his sister, as the beam
Of the East, that play'd upon them,
made them glance
Like those three stars of the airy
Giant's zone,
That glitter burnish'd by the frosty
dark;
And as the fiery Sirius alters hue,
And bickers into red and emerald,
shone
Their morions, wash'd with morning,
as they came.

And I that prated peace, when first
I heard
War-music, felt the blind wildbeast of
force,
Whose home is in the sinews of a
man,
Stir in me as to strike: then took the
king
His three broad sons; with now a
wandering hand
And now a pointed finger, told them
all:
A common light of smiles at our dis-
guise
Broke from their lips, and, ere the
windy jest
Had labor'd down within his ample
lungs,
The genial giant, Arac, roll'd himself
Thrice in the saddle, then burst out in
words.

'Our land invaded, 'sdeath! and he
himself
Your captive, yet my father wills not
war:

And, 'sdeath! myself, what care I,
war or no?
But then this question of your troth
remains:
And there's a downright honest mean-
ing in her;
She flies too high, she flies too high!
and yet
She ask'd but space and fairplay for
her scheme;
She prest and prest it on me—I my-
self,
What know I of these things? but,
life and soul!
I thought her half-right talking of her
wrongs;
I say she flies too high, 'sdeath! what
of that?
I take her for the flower of woman-
kind,
And so I often told her, right or
wrong,
And, Prince, she can be sweet to those
she loves,
And, right or wrong, I care not: this
is all,
I stand upon her side: she made me
swear it—
'Sdeath—and with solemn rites by
candle-light—
Swear by St. something—I forget her
name—
Her that talk'd down the fifty wisest
men;
She was a princess too; and so I
swore.
Come, this is all; she will not: waive
your claim:
If not, the foughten field, what else,
at once
Decides it, 'sdeath! against my fath-
er's will.'

I lagg'd in answer loth to render up
My precontract, and loth by brainless
war
To cleave the rift of difference deeper
yet;
Till one of those two brothers, half
aside
And fingering at the hair about his lip,
To prick us on to combat 'Like to
like!

The woman's garment hid the wo-
man's heart.'
A taunt that clench'd his purpose like
a blow!
For fiery-short was Cyril's counter-
scoff,
And sharp I answer'd, touch'd upon
the point
Where idle boys are cowards to their
shame,
'Decide it here: why not? we are
three to three.'

Then spake the third 'But three
to three? no more?
No more, and in our noble sister's
cause?
More, more, for honor: every cap-
tain waits
Hungry for honor, angry for his king.
More, more, some fifty on a side, that
each
May breathe himself, and quick! by
overthrow
Of these or those, the question settled
die.'

'Yea,' answer'd I, 'for this wild
wreath of air,
This flake of rainbow flying on the
highest
Foam of men's deeds—this honor, if
ye will.
It needs must be for honor if at all:
Since, what decision? if we fail, we
fail,
And if we win, we fail: she would not
keep
Her compact.' 'Sdeath! but we will
send to her,'
Said Arac, 'worthy reasons why she
should
Bide by this issue: let our missive
thro',
And you shall have her answer by the
word.'

'Boys!' shriek'd the old king, but
vainlier than a hen
To her false daughters in the pool;
for none
Regarded; neither seem'd there more
to say:



"WITH TWO TAME LEOPARDS CROUCH'D BESIDE HER THRONE"—Page 38.

Back rode we to my father's camp
and found
He thrice had sent a herald to the
gates,
To learn if Ida yet would cede our
claim,
Or by denial flush her babbling wells
With her own people's life: three
times he went:
The first, he blew and blew, but none
appear'd:
He batter'd at the doors; none came:
the next,
An awful voice within had warn'd him
thence:
The third, and those eight daughters
of the plough
Came sallying thro' the gates, and
caught his hair,
And so belabor'd him on rib and cheek
They made him wild: not less one
glance he caught
Thro' open doors of Ida station'd
there
Unshaken, clinging to her purpose,
firm
Tho' compass'd by two armies and
the noise
Of arms; and standing like a stately
Pine
Set in a cataract on an island-crag,
When storm is on the heights, and
right and left
Suck'd from the dark heart of the
long hills roll
The torrents, dash'd to the vale: and
yet her will
Bred will in me to overcome it or fall.

But when I told the king that I was
pledged
To fight in tourney for my bride, he
clash'd
His iron palms together with a cry;
Himself would tilt it out among the
lads:
But overborne by all his bearded lords
With reasons drawn from age and
state, perforce
He yielded, wroth and red, with fierce
demur:
And many a bold knight started up
in heat,

And swore to combat for my claim till
death.

All on this side the palace ran the
field
Flat to the garden-wall: and likewise
here,
Above the garden's glowing blossom-
belts,
A column'd entry shone and marble
stairs,
And great bronze valves, emboss'd
with Tomyris
And what she did to Cyrus after fight,
But now fast barr'd: so here upon the
flat
All that long morn the lists were
hammer'd up,
And all that morn the heralds to and
fro,
With message and defiance, went and
came;
Last, Ida's answer, in a royal hand,
But shaken here and there, and roll-
ing words
Oration-like. I kiss'd it and I read.

'O brother, you have known the
pangs we felt,
What heats of indignation when we
heard
Of those that iron-cram'd their
women's feet;
Of lands in which at the altar the poor
bride
Gives her harsh groom for bridal-gift
a scourge;
Of living hearts that crack within the
fire
Where smoulder their dead despots;
and of those,—
Mothers,—that, all prophetic pity,
fling
Their pretty maids in the running
flood, and swoops
The vulture, beak and talon, at the
heart
Made for all noble motion: and I
saw
That equal baseness lived in sleeker
times
With smoother men: the old leaven
leaven'd all:

Millions of throats would bawl for
civil rights,
No woman named: therefore I set my
face
Against all men, and lived but for
mine own.
Far off from men I built a fold for
them:
I stored it full of rich memorial:
I fenced it round with gallant insti-
tutes,
And biting laws to scare the beasts of
prey
And prosper'd; till a rout of saucy boys
Brake on us at our books, and marr'd
our peace,
Mask'd like our maids, blustering I
know not what
Of insolence and love, some pretext
held
Of baby troth, invalid, since my will
Seal'd not the bond—the striplings!—
for their sport!—
I tamed my leopards: shall I not
tame these?
Or you? or I? for since you think me
touch'd
In honor—what, I would not aught of
false—
Is not our cause pure? and whereas
I know
Your prowess, Arac, and what moth-
er's blood
You draw from, fight; you failing, I
abide
What end soever: fail you will not.
Still
Take not his life: he risk'd it for my
own;
His mother lives: yet whatsoe'er you
do,
Fight and fight well; strike and
strike home. O dear
Brothers, the woman's Angel guards
you, you
The sole men to be mingled with our
cause,
The sole men we shall prize in the
after-time,
Your very armor hallow'd, and your
statues
Rear'd. sung to, when, this gad-fly
brush'd aside,

We plant a solid foot into the Time,
And mould a generation strong to
move
With claim on claim from right to
right, till she
Whose name is yoked with children's,
know herself;
And Knowledge in our own land
make her free,
And, ever following those two crowned
twins,
Commerce and conquest, shower the
fiery grain
Of freedom broadcast over all that
orbs
Between the Northern and the South-
ern morn.'

Then came a postscript dash'd
across the rest.
'See that there be no traitors in your
camp:
We seem a nest of traitors—none to
trust
Since our arms fail'd—this Egypt-
plague of men!
Almost our maids were better at
their homes,
Than thus man-girdled here: indeed
I think
Our chiefest comfort is the little child
Of one unworthy mother; which she
left:
She shall not have it back: the child
shall grow
To prize the authentic mother of her
mind.
I took it for an hour in mine own bed
This morning: there the tender or-
phan hands
Felt at my heart, and seem'd to charm
from thence
The wrath I nursed against the world:
farewell.'

I ceased; he said, 'Stubborn, but
she may sit
Upon a king's right hand in thunder-
storms,
And breed up warriors! See now,
tho' yourself
Be dazzled by the wildfire Love to
sloughs

That swallow common sense, the
spindling king,
This Gama swamp'd in lazy toler-
ance.

When the man wants weight, the
woman takes it up,
And topples down the scales; but
this is fixt

As are the roots of earth and base of
all;

Man for the field, and woman for the
hearth:

Man for the sword and for the needle
she:

Man with the head and woman with
the heart:

Man to command and woman to obey;
All else confusion. Look you! the
gray mare

Is ill to live with, when her whinny
shrills

From tile to scullery, and her small
goodman

Shrinks in his arm chair while the
fires of Hell

Mix with his hearth: but you—she's
yet a colt—

Take, break her: strongly groom'd
and straitly curb'd

She might not rank with those de-
testable

That let the bantling scald at home,
and brawl

Their rights or wrongs like potherbs
in the street.

They say she's comei; there's the
fairer chance:

/like her none the less for rating at
her!

Besides, the woman wed is not as we,
but suffers change of frame. A lusty
brace

Of twins may weed her of her folly.

Boy,
The bearing and the training of a
child

Is woman's wisdom.'

Thus the hard old king:
I took my leave, for it was nearly
noon:

I pored upon her letter which I held,
And on the little clause 'take not his
life:'

I mused on that wild morning in the
woods,

And on the 'Follow, follow, thou
shalt win:'

I thought on all the wrathful king had
said,

And how the strange betrothment
was to end:

Then I remember'd that burnt sor-
cerer's curse

That one should fight with shadows
and should fall;

And like a flash the weird affection
came:

King, camp and college turn'd to
hollow shows;

I seem'd to move in old memorial tilts,
And doing battle with forgotten

ghosts,
To dream myself the shadow of a
dream:

And ere I woke it was the point of
noon,

The lists were ready. Empanoplied
and plumed

We enter'd in, and waited, fifty there
Opposed to fifty, till the trumpet

blared
At the barrier like a wild horn in a land
Of echoes, and a moment, and once

more
The trumpet, and again: at which the
storm

Of galloping hoofs bare on the ridge
of spears

And riders front to front, until they
closed

In conflict with the crash of shivering
points,

And thunder. Yet it seem'd a dream,
I dream'd

Of fighting. On his haunches rose
the steed,

And into fiery splinters leapt the
lance,

And out of stricken helmets sprang
the fire.

Part sat like rocks: part reel'd but
kept their seats:

Part roll'd on the earth and rose
again and drew:

Part stumbled mixt with floundering
horses. Down

From those two bulks at Arac's side,
 and down
 From Arac's arm, as from a giant's
 flail,
 The large blows rain'd, as here and
 everywhere
 He rode the mellay, lord of the ring-
 ing lists,
 And all the plain,—brand, mace, and
 shaft, and shield—
 Shock'd, like an iron-clanging anvil
 bang'd
 With hammers; till I thought, can
 this be he
 From Gama's dwarfish loins? if this
 be so,
 The mother makes us most—and in
 my dream
 I glanced aside, and saw the palace-
 front
 Alive with fluttering scarfs and ladies'
 eyes,
 And highest, among the statues,
 statuelike,
 Between a cymbal'd Miriam and a
 Jael,
 With Psyche's babe, was Ida watching
 us,
 A single band of gold about her hair,
 Like a Saint's glory up in heaven:
 but she
 No saint—inexorable—no tender-
 ness—
 Too hard, too cruel: yet she sees me
 fight,
 Yea, let her see me fall! with that I
 drave
 Among the thickest and bore down a
 Prince,
 And Cyril, one. Yea, let me make
 my dream
 All that I would. But that large-
 moulded man,
 His visage all agrin as at a wake,
 Made at me thro' the press, and, stag-
 gering back
 With stroke on stroke the horse and
 horseman, came
 As comes a pillar of electric cloud,
 Flaying the roofs and sucking up the
 drains,
 And shadowing down the champaign
 till it strikes

On a wood, and takes, and breaks,
 and cracks, and splits,
 And twists the grain with such a roar
 that Earth
 Reels, and the herdsmen cry; for
 everything
 Gave way before him: only Florian,
 he
 That loved me closer than his own
 right eye,
 Thrust in between; but Arac rode
 him down:
 And Cyril seeing it, push'd against
 the Prince,
 With Psyche's color round his helmet,
 tough,
 Strong, supple, sinew-corded, apt at
 arms;
 But tougher, heavier, stronger, he that
 smote
 And threw him: last I spurr'd; I felt
 my veins
 Stretch with fierce heat; a moment
 hand to hand,
 And sword to sword, and horse to
 horse we hung,
 Till I struck out and shouted; the
 blade glanced,
 I did but shear a feather, and dream
 and truth
 Flow'd from me; darkness closed
 me; and I fell.

VI.

Home they brought her warrior dead:
 She nor swoon'd, nor utter'd cry:
 All her maidens, watching, said,
 'She must weep or she will die.'
 Then they praised him, soft and low,
 Call'd him worthy to be loved,
 Truest friend and noblest foe;
 Yet she neither spoke nor moved.
 Stole a maiden from her place,
 Lightly to the warrior stept,
 Took the face-cloth from the face;
 Yet she neither moved nor wept.
 Rose a nurse of ninety years,
 Set his child upon her knee—
 Like a summer tempest came her tears—
 'Sweet my child, I live for thee.'

My dream had never died or lived again.

As in some mystic middle state I lay;
Seeing I saw not, hearing not I heard:
Tho', if I saw not, yet they told me all
So often that I speak as having seen.

For so it seem'd, or so they said to me,
That all things grew more tragic and more strange;
That when our side was vanquish'd and my cause
For ever lost, there went up a great cry,
The Prince is slain. My father heard and ran
In on the lists, and there unlaced my casque
And grovell'd on my body, and after him
Came Psyche, sorrowing for Aglaïa.

But high upon the palace Ida stood
With Psyche's babe in arm: there on the roofs
Like that great dame of Lapidoth she sang.

'Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n: the seed,
The little seed they laugh'd at in the dark,
Has risen and cleft the soil, and grown a bulk
Of spanless girth, that lays on every side
A thousand arms and rushes to the Sun.

'Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n: they came;
The leaves were wet with women's tears: they heard
A noise of songs they would not understand:
They mark'd it with the red cross to the fall,
And would have strown it, and are fall'n themselves.

'Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n: they came,
The woodmen with their axes: lo the tree!
But we will make it faggots for the hearth,
And shape it plank and beam for roof and floor,
And boats and bridges for the use of men.

'Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n: they struck;
With their own blows they hurt themselves, nor knew
There dwelt an iron nature in the grain:
The glittering axe was broken in their arms,
Their arms were shatter'd to the shoulder blade.

'Our enemies have fall'n, but this shall grow
A night of Summer from the heat, a breadth
Of Autumn, dropping fruits of power: and roll'd
With music in the growing breeze of Time,
The tops shall strike from star to star, the fangs
Shall move the stony bases of the world.

'And now, O maids, behold our sanctuary
Is violate, our laws broken: fear we not
To break them more in their behoof, whose arms
Champion'd our cause and won it with a day
Blanch'd in our annals, and perpetual feast,
When dames and heroines of the golden year
Shall strip a hundred hollows bare of Spring,
To rain an April of ovation round
Their statues, borne aloft, the three: but come,
We will be liberal, since our rights are won.
Let them not lie in the tents with coarse mankind,
Ill nurses; but descend, and proffer these
The brethren of our blood and cause, that there
Lie braised and maim'd, the tender ministries
Of female hands and hospitality.'

She spoke, and with the babe yet in her arms,
Descending, burst the great bronze valves, and led

A hundred maids in train across the
 Park.
 Some cowl'd and some bare-headed,
 on they came,
 Their feet in flowers, her loveliest . by
 them went
 The enamor'd air sighing, and on
 their curls
 From the high tree the blossom wav-
 ering fell,
 And over them the tremulous isles of
 light
 Slided, they moving under shade .
 but Blanche
 At distance follow'd : so they came :
 anon
 Thro' open field into the lists they
 wound
 Timorously ; and as the leader of the
 herd
 That holds a stately fretwork to the
 Sun,
 And follow'd up by a hundred airy
 docs,
 Steps with a tender foot, light as on
 air,
 The lovely, lordly creature floated on
 To where her wounded brethren lay ;
 there stay'd ;
 Knelt on one knee,—the child on one,
 —and prest
 Their hands, and call'd them dear de-
 liverers,
 And happy warriors, and immortal
 names,
 And said ' You shall not lie in the
 tents but here,
 And nursed by those for whom you
 fought, and served
 With female hands and hospitality.'

Then, whether moved by this, or
 was it chance,
 She past my way. Up started from
 my side
 The old lion, glaring with his whelp-
 less eye,
 Silent ; but when she saw me lying
 stark,
 Dishelm'd and mute, and motionlessly
 pale,
 Cold ev'n to her, she sigh'd ; and
 when she saw

The haggard father's face and rever-
 end beard
 Of grisly twine, all dabbled with the
 blood
 Of his own son, shudder'd, a twitch of
 pain
 Tortured her mouth, and o'er her fore-
 head past
 A shadow, and her hue changed, and
 she said :
 ' He saved my life : my brother slew
 him for it.'
 No more ; at which the king in bitter
 scorn
 Drew from my neck the painting and
 the tress,
 And held them up : she saw them,
 and a day
 Rose from the distance on her mem-
 ory,
 When the good Queen, her mother,
 shore the tress
 With kisses, ere the days of Lady
 Blanche .
 And then once more she look'd at
 my pale face
 Till understanding all the foolish
 work
 Of Fancy, and the bitter close of all,
 Her iron will was broken in her mind ;
 Her noble heart was molten in her
 breast ;
 She bow'd, she set the child on the
 earth ; she laid
 A feeling finger on my brows, and
 presently
 ' O Sire,' she said, ' he lives : he is not
 dead :
 O let me have him with my brethren
 here
 In our own palace : we will tend on
 him
 Like one of these ; if so, by any
 means,
 To lighten this great clog of thanks,
 that make
 Our progress falter to the woman's
 goal.'

She said : but at the happy word
 ' he lives '
 My father stoop'd, re-father'd o'er my
 wounds.

So those two foes above my fallen
 life,
With brow to brow like night and
evening mixt
Their dark and gray, while Psyche
ever stole
A little nearer, till the babe that by
 us,
Half-lapt in glowing gauze and golden
 brede,
Lay like a new-fall'n meteor on the
 grass,
Uncared for, spied its mother and
 began
A blind and babbling laughter, and to
dance
Its body, and reach its fatling innocent
 arms
And lazy lingering fingers. She the
 appeal
Brook'd not, but clamoring out 'Mine
 —mine—not yours,
It is not yours, but mine: give me the
 child'
Ceased all on tremble: piteous was
 the cry:
So stood the unhappy mother open-
 mouth'd,
And turn'd each face her way: wan
 was her cheek
With hollow watch, her blooming
 mantle torn,
Red grief and mother's hunger in her
 eye,
And down dead-heavy sank her curls,
 and half
The sacred mother's bosom, panting,
 burst
The laces toward her babe; but she
 nor cared
Nor knew it, clamoring on, till Ida
 heard,
Look'd up, and rising slowly from me,
 stood
Erect and silent, striking with her
 glance
The mother, me, the child; but he that
 lay
Beside us, Cyril, batter'd as he was,
Trail'd himself up on one knee: then
 he drew
Her robe to meet his lips, and down
 she look'd

At the arm'd man sideways, pitying as
 it seem'd,
Or self-involved; but when she learnt
 his face,
Remembering his ill-omen'd song,
 arose
Once more thro' all her height, and
 o'er him grew
Tall as a figure lengthen'd on the sand
When the tide ebbs in sunshine, and
 he said:

'O fair and strong and terrible!
 Lioness
That with your long locks play the
 Lion's mane!
But Love and Nature, these are two
 more terrible
And stronger. See, your foot is on
 our necks,
We vanquish'd, you the Victor of your
 will.
What would you more? give her the
 child! remain
Orb'd in your isolation: he is dead,
Or all as dead: henceforth we let you
 be:
Win you the hearts of women; and
 beware
Lest, where you seek the common
 love of these,
The common hate with the revolving
 wheel
Should drag you down, and some
 great Nemesis
Break from a darken'd future, crown'd
 with fire,
And tread you out for ever: but how-
 soe'er
Fix'd in yourself, never in your own
 arms
To hold your own, deny not hers to
 her,
Give her the child! O if, I say, you
 keep
One pulse that beats true woman, if
 you loved
The breast that fed or arm that dan-
 dled you,
Or own one port of sense not flint to
 prayer,
Give her the child! or if you scorn to
 lay it,

Yourself, in hands so lately claspt
with yours,
Or speak to her, your dearest, her one
fault
The tenderness, not yours, that could
not kill,
Give *me* it: *I* will give it her.'

He said:
At first her eye with slow dilation
roll'd
Dry flame, she listening: after sank
and sank
And, into mournful twilight mellow-
ing, dwelt
Full on the child; she took it:
'Pretty bud!
Lily of the vale! half open'd bell of
the woods!
Sole comfort of my dark hour, when
a world
Of traitorous friend and broken sys-
tem made
No purple in the distance, mystery,
Pledge of a love not to be mine,
farewell;
These men are hard upon us as of
old,
We two must part; and yet how fain
was I
To dream thy cause embraced in mine,
to think
I might be something to thee, when I
felt
Thy helpless warmth about my barren
breast
In the dead prime: but may thy
mother prove
As true to thee as false, false, false to
me!
And, if thou needs must bear the
yoke, I wish it
Gentle as freedom!—here she kiss'd
it: then—
'All good go with thee! take it Sir,'
and so
Laid the soft babe in his hard-mailed
hands,
Who turn'd half-round to Psyche as
she sprang
To meet it, with an eye that swum in
thanks;
Then felt it sound and whole from
head to foot,

And hugg'd and never hugg'd it close
enough,
And in her hunger mouth'd and
mumbled it,
And hid her bosom with it; after that
Put on more calm and added suppli-
antly:

'We two were friends: I go to
mine own land
For ever: find some other: as for me
I scarce am fit for your great plans:
yet speak to me,
Say one soft word and let me part
forgiven.'

But Ida spoke not, rapt upon the
child.
Then Arac. 'Ida—'sdeath! you
blame the man;
You wrong yourselves—the woman is
so hard
Upon the woman. Come, a grace to
me!
I am your warrior: I and mine have
fought
Your battle: kiss her; take her hand,
she weeps
'Sdeath! I would sooner fight thrice
o'er than see it.'

But Ida spoke not, gazing on the
ground,
And reddening in the furrows of his
chin,
And moved beyond his custom,
Gama said:

'I've heard that there is iron in the
blood,
And I believe it. Not one word? not
one?
Whence drew you this steel temper?
not from me,
Not from your mother, now a saint
with saints.
She said you had a heart—I heard
her say it—
"Our Ida has a heart"—just ere she
died—
"But see that some one with authority
Be near her still" and I—I sought
for one—

All people said she had authority—
The Lady Blanche: much profit!
Not one word;
No! tho' your father sues: see how
you stand
Stiff as Lot's wife, and all the good
knights maim'd,
I trust that there is no one hurt to
death,
Fr your wild whim: and was it then
for this,
Was it for this we gave our palace
up,
Where we withdrew from summer
heats and state,
And had our wine and chess beneath
the planes,
And many a pleasant hour with her
that's gone,
Ere you were born to vex us? Is it
kind?
Speak to her I say: is this not she of
whom,
When first she came, all flush'd you
said to me
Now had you got a friend of your own
age,
Now could you share your thought:
now should men see
Two women faster welded in one love
Than pairs of wedlock; she you
walk'd with, she
You talk'd with, whole nights long,
up in the tower,
Of sine and arc, spheroid and azi-
muth,
And right ascension, Heaven knows
what; and now
A word, but one, one little kindly
word,
Not one to spare her: out upon you,
flint!
You love nor her, nor me, nor any;
nay,
You shame your mother's judgment
too. Not one?
You will not? well—no heart have
you, or such
As fancies like the vermin in a nut
Have fretted all to dust and bitter-
ness.
So said the small king moved beyond
his wont.

But Ida stood nor spoke, drain'd of
her force
By many a varying influence and so
long,
Down thro' her limbs a drooping
languor wept:
Her head a little bent; and on her
mouth
A doubtful smile dwelt like a clouded
moon
In a still water: then brake out my
sire,
Lifting his grim head from my
wounds. 'O you,
Woman, whom we thought woman
even now,
And were half fool'd to let you tend
our son,
Because he might have wish'd it—but
we see
The accomplice of your madness
unforgiven,
And think that you might mix his
draught with death,
When your skies change again: the
rougher hand
Is safer: on to the tents: take up the
Prince.'

He rose, and while each ear was
prick'd to attend
A tempest, thro' the cloud that
dimm'd her broke
A genial warmth and light once more,
and shone
Thro' glittering drops on her sad
friend.

'Come hither.
O Psyche,' she cried out, 'embrace
me, come,
Quick while I melt; make reconcil-
ement sure
With one that cannot keep her mind
an hour:
Come to the hollow heart they
slander so!
Kiss and be friends, like children
being chid!
I seem no more: I want forgiveness
too:
I should have had to do with none
but maids,

That have no links with men. Ah
false but dear,
Dear traitor, too much loved, why?—
why?—Vet see,
Before these kings we embrace you
yet once more
With all forgiveness, all oblivion,
And trust, not love, you less.

And now, O sire,
Grant me your son, to nurse, to wait
upon him,
Like mine own brother. For my debt
to him,
This nightmare weight of gratitude, I
know it;

Taunt me no more: yourself and yours
shall have
Free adit; we will scatter all our maids
Till happier times each to her proper
hearth:

What use to keep them here—now?
grant my prayer.

Help, father, brother, help; speak to
the king:

Thaw this male nature to some touch
of that

Which kills me with myself, and drags
me down

From my fixt height to mob me up
with all

The soft and milky rabble of woman-
kind,

Poor weakling ev'n as they are.'

Passionate tears
Follow'd: the king replied not: Cyril
said:

'Your brother, Lady,—Florian,—ask
for him

Of your great head—for he is wounded
too—

That you may tend upon him with the
prince.'

'Ay so,' said Ida with a bitter smile,
'Our laws are broken: let him enter
too.'

Then Violet, she that sang the mourn-
ful song,

And had a cousin tumbled on the plain,
Petition'd too for him. 'Ay so,' she
said,

'I stagger in the stream: I cannot keep
My heart an eddy from the brawling
hour:

We break our laws with ease, but let
it be.'

'Ay so?' said Blanche: 'Amazed am
I to hear

Your Highness: but your Highness
breaks with ease

The law your Highness did not make:
'twas I.

I had been wedded wife, I knew man-
kind,

And block'd them out; but these men
came to woo

Your Highness—verily I think to win.'

So she, and turn'd askance a wintry
eye:

But Ida with a voice, that like a bell
Toll'd by an earthquake in a trembling
tower,

Rang ruin, answer'd full of grief and
scorn.

'Fling our doors wide! all, all, not
one, but all,

Not only he, but by my mother's soul,
Whatever man lies wounded, friend or
foe,

Shall enter, if he will. Let our girls
flit,

Till the storm die! but had you stood
by us,

The roar that breaks the Pharos from
his base

Had left us rock. She fain would
sting us too,

But shall not. Pass, and mingle with
your likes.

We brook no further insult but are
gone.'

She turn'd; the very nape of her
white neck

Was rosed with indignation: but the
Prince

Her brother came; the king her father
charm'd

Her wounded soul with words: nor
did mine own

Refuse her proffer, lastly gave his
hand.

Then us they lifted up, dead weights,
and bare

Straight to the doors : to them the
doors gave way
Groaning, and in the Vestal entry
shriek'd

The virgin marble under iron heels :
And on they moved and gain'd the hall,
and there

Rested : but great the crush was, and
each base,

To left and right, of those tall columns
drown'd

In silken fluctuation and the swarm
Of female whisperers : at the further
end

Was Ida by the throne, the two great
cats

Close by her, like supporters on a
shield,

Bow-back'd with fear : but in the
centre stood

The common men with rolling eyes ;
amazed

They glared upon the women, and
aghast

The women stared at these, all silent,
save

When armor clash'd or jingled, while
the day,

Descending, struck athwart the hall,
and shot

A flying splendor out of brass and steel,
That o'er the statues leapt from head
to head,

Now fired an angry Pallas on the
helm,

Now set a wrathful Dian's moon on
flame,

And now and then an echo started up,
And shuddering fled from room to
room, and died

Of fright in far apartments.

Then the voice
Of Ida sounded, issuing ordinance :
And me they bore up the broad stairs,
and thro'

The long-laid galleries past a hundred
doors

To one deep chamber shut from sound,
and due

To languid limbs and sickness ; left
me in it ;

And others elsewhere they laid ; and
all

That afternoon a sound arose of hoof
And chariot, many a maiden passing
home

Till happier times ; but some were left
of those

Held sagest, and the great lords out
and in,

From those two hosts that lay beside
the walls,

Walk'd at their will, and everything
was changed.

VII.

Ask me no more : the moon may draw the
sea ;

The cloud may stoop from heaven and
take the shape

With fold to fold, of mountain or of cape ;
But O too fond, when have I answer'd
thee ?

Ask me no more.

Ask me no more : what answer should I
give ?

I love not hollow cheek or faded eye :

Yet O my friend, I will not have thee
die :

Ask me no more, lest I should bid thee
live ;

Ask me no more.

Ask me no more : thy fate and mine are
seal'd :

I strove against the stream and all in
vain :

Let the great river take me to the main :

No more, dear love, for at a touch I yield ;
Ask me no more.

So was their sanctuary violated,
So their fair college turn'd to hospital ;

At first with all confusion : by and by
Sweet order lived again with other
laws :

A kindlier influence reign'd ; and
everywhere

Low voices with the ministering hand
Hung round the sick : the maidens
came, they talk'd,

They sang, they read : till she not fair
began

To gather light, and she that was,
became

Her former beauty treble ; and to and
 iro
 With books, with flowers, with Angel
 offices,
 Like creatures native unto gracious
 act,
 And in their own clear element, they
 moved.

But sadness on the soul of Ida fell,
 And hatred of her weakness, blent
 with shame.
 Old studies fail'd ; seldom she spoke :
 but oft
 Clomb to the roofs, and gazed alone
 for hours
 On that disastrous leaguer, swarms of
 men
 Darkening her female field : void was
 her use,
 And she as one that climbs a peak to
 gaze
 O'er land and main, and sees a great
 black cloud
 Drag inward from the deeps, a wall of
 night,
 Blot out the slope of sea from verge
 to shore
 And suck the blinding splendor from
 the sand,
 And quenching lake by lake and tarn
 by tarn
 Expunge the world : so fared she gaz-
 ing there ;
 So blacken'd all her world in secret,
 blank
 And waste it seem'd and vain ; till
 down she came,
 And found fair peace once more
 among the sick.

And twilight dawn'd ; and morn by
 morn the lark
 Shot up and shrill'd in flickering gyres,
 but I
 Lay silent in the muffled cage of life :
 And twilight gloom'd ; and broader-
 grown the bowers
 Drew the great night into themselves,
 and Heaven,
 Star after star, arose and fell ; but I,
 Deeper than those weird doubts could
 reach me, lay

Quite sunder'd from the moving Uni-
 verse,
 Nor knew what eye was on me, nor
 the hand
 That nursed me, more than infants in
 their sleep.

But Psyche tended Florian : with
 her oft,
 Melissa came ; for Blanche had gone,
 but left
 Her child among us, willing she
 should keep
 Court-favor : here and there the
 small bright head,
 A light of healing, glanced about the
 couch,
 Or thro' the parted silks the tender
 face
 Peep'd, shining in upon the wounded
 man
 With blush and smile, a medicine in
 themselves
 To wile the length from languorous
 hours, and draw
 The sting from pain ; nor seem'd it
 strange that soon
 He rose up whole, and those fair
 charities
 Join'd at her side ; nor stranger
 seem'd that hearts
 So gentle, so employ'd, should close
 in love,
 Than when two dewdrops on the petal
 shake
 To the same sweet air, and tremble
 deeper down,
 And slip at once all-fragrant into one.

Less prosperously the second suit
 obtain'd
 At first with Psyche. Not tho'
 Blanche had sworn
 That after that dark night among the
 fields
 She needs must wed him for her own
 good name ;
 Not tho' he built upon the babe re-
 stored ;
 Nor tho' she liked him, yielded she,
 but fear'd
 To incense the Head once more ; till
 on a day

When Cyril pleaded, Ida came behind
Seen but of Psyche: on her foot she
hung
A moment, and she heard, at which
her face
A little flush'd, and she past on; but
each
Assumed from thence a half-consent
involved
In stillness, plighted troth, and were
at peace.

Nor only these: Love in the sacred
halls
Held carnival at will, and flying struck
With showers of random sweet on
maid and man.
Nor did her father cease to press my
claim,
Nor did mine own now reconciled;
nor yet
Did those twin brothers, risen again
and whole;
Nor Arac, satiate with his victory.

But I lay still, and with me oft she
sat:
Then came a change; for sometimes
I would catch
Her hand in wild delirium, gripe it
hard,
And fling it like a viper off, and
shriek
'You are not Ida;' clasp it once again,
And call her Ida, tho' I knew her not,
And call her sweet, as if in irony,
And call her hard and cold which
seem'd a truth:
And still she fear'd that I should lose
my mind,
And often she believed that I should
die:
Till out of long frustration of her care,
And pensive tendance in the all-
weary noons,
And watches in the dead, the dark,
when clocks
Throbb'd thunder thro' the palace
floors, or call'd
On flying Time from all their silver
tongues—
And out of memories of her kindlier
days,

And sidelong glances at my father's
grief,
And at the happy lovers heart in
heart—
And out of hauntings of my spoken
love,
And lonely listenings to my mutter'd
dream,
And often feeling of the helpless
hands,
And wordless broodings on the wasted
cheek—
From all a closer interest flourish'd up,
Tenderness touch by touch, and last,
to these,
Love, like an Alpine harebell hung
with tears
By some cold morning glacier; frail
at first
And feeble, all unconscious of itself,
But such as gather'd color day by day.

Last I woke sane, but well-nigh
close to death
For weakness: it was evening: silent
light
Slept on the painted walls, wherein
were wrought
Two grand designs; for on one side
arose
The women up in wild revolt, and
storm'd
At the Oppian law. Titanic shapes,
they cramm'd
The forum, and half-crush'd among
the rest
A dwarf-like Cato cower'd. On the
other side
Hortensia spoke against the tax;
behind,
A train of dames: by axe and eagle
sat,
With all their foreheads drawn in
Roman scowls,
And half the wolf's-milk curdled in
their veins,
The fierce triumvirs; and before them
paused
Hortensia pleading: angry was her
face.

I saw the forms: I knew not where
I was:

They did but look like hollow shows;
 nor more
 Sweet Ida: palm to palm she sat: the
 dew
 Dwelt in her eyes, and softer all her
 shape
 And rounder seem'd: I moved: I
 sigh'd: a touch
 Came round my wrist, and tears upon
 my hand:
 Then all for languor and self-pity ran
 Mine down my face, and with what
 life I had,
 And like a flower that cannot all
 unfold,
 So drench'd it is with tempest, to the
 sun,
 Yet, as it may, turns toward him, I on
 her
 Fixt my faint eyes, and utter'd whis-
 peringly:

'If you be, what I think you, some
 sweet dream.
 I would but ask you to fulfil yourself:
 But if you be that Ida whom I knew,
 I ask you nothing: only, if a dream,
 Sweet dream, be perfect. I shall die
 to-night.
 Stoop down and seem to kiss me ere
 I die.'

I could no more, but lay like one in
 trance,
 That hears his burial talk'd of by his
 friends,
 And cannot speak, nor move, nor
 make one sign,
 But lies and dreads his doom. She
 turn'd; she paused;
 She stoop'd; and out of languor leapt
 a cry;
 Leapt fiery Passion from the brinks of
 death;
 And I believed that in the living
 world
 My spirit closed with Ida's at the lips;
 'Till back I fell, and from mine arms
 she rose
 Glowing all over noble shame; and
 all
 Her falsè self slipt from her like a
 robe,

And left her woman, lovelier in her
 mood
 Than in her mould that other, when
 she came
 From barren deeps to conquer all
 with love;
 And down the streaming crystal drop;
 and she
 Far-fleeted by the purple island-sides,
 Naked, a double light in air and wave,
 To meet her Graces, where they
 deck'd her out
 For worship without end; nor end of
 mine,
 Stateliest, for thee! but mute she
 glided forth,
 Nor glanced behind her, and I sank
 and slept,
 Fill'd thro' and thro' with Love, a
 happy sleep.

Deep in the night I woke: she,
 near me, held
 A volume of the Poets of her land:
 There to herself, all in low tones, she
 read.

'Now sleeps the crimson petal, now the
 white;
 Nor waves the cypress in the palace walk;
 Nor winks the gold fin in the porphyry
 font;
 The fire-fly wakens: waken thou with me.

Now droops the milkwhite peacock like
 a ghost,
 And like a ghost she glimmers on to me.

Now lies the Earth all Danaë to the stars,
 And all thy heart lies open unto me.

Now slides the silent meteor on, and
 leaves
 A shining furrow, as thy thoughts in me.

Now folds the lily all her sweetness up,
 And slips into the bosom of the lake:
 So fold thyself, my dearest, thou, and slip
 Into my bosom and be lost in me.'

I heard her turn the page; she
 found a small
 Sweet Idyl, and once more, as low, she
 read:

'Come down, O maid, from yonder
mountain height:
What pleasure lives in height (the shepherd
sang)
In height and cold, the splendor of the
hills?
But cease to move so near the Heavens,
and cease
To glide a sunbeam by the blasted Pine,
To sit a star upon the sparkling spire;
And come, for Love is of the valley, come,
For Love is of the valley, come thou down
And find him; by the happy threshold, he,
Or hand in hand with Plenty in the maize,
Or red with spirted purple of the vats,
Or foxlike in the vine; nor cares to walk
With Death and Moring on the silver
horns,
Nor wilt thou snare him in the white ravine,
Nor find him dropt upon the firths of ice,
That huddling slant in furrow-cloven
falls
To roll the torrent out of dusky doors:
But follow; let the torrent dance thee
down
To find him in the valley; let the wild
Lean-headed Eagles yelp alone, and leave
The monstrous ledges there to slope, and
spill
Their thousand wreaths of dangling water-
smoke,
That like a broken purpose waste in air:
So waste not thou; but come; for all the
vales
Await thee; azure pillars of the hearth
Arise to thee; the children call, and I
Thy shepherd pipe, and sweet is every
sound,
Sweeter thy voice, but every sound is
sweet;
Myriads of rivulets hurrying thro' the
lawn,
The moan of doves in immemorial elms,
And murmuring of innumerable bees.'

So she low-toned; while with shut
eyes I lay
Listening; then look'd. Pale was
the perfect face;
The bosom with long sighs labor'd;
and meek
Seem'd the full lips, and mild the lu-
minous eyes,

And the voice trembled and the hand.
She said
Brokenly, that she knew it, she had
fail'd
In sweet humility; had fail'd in all;
That all her labor was but as a
block
Left in the quarry; but she still were
loth,
She still were loth to yield herself to
one
That wholly scorn'd to help their
equal rights
Against the sons of men, and barbar-
ous laws.
She pray'd me not to judge their
cause from her
That wrong'd it, sought far less for
truth than power
In knowledge: something wild within
her breast,
A greater than all knowledge, beat
her down.
And she had nursed me there from
week to week:
Much had she learnt in little time.
In part
It was ill counsel had misled the girl
To vex true hearts: yet was she but a
girl—
'Ah fool, and made myself a Queen of
farce!
When comes another such? never, I
think,
Till the Sun drop, dead, from the
signs.'

Her voice
Choked, and her forehead sank upon
her hands,
And her great heart thro' all the
faultful Past
Went sorrowing in a pause I dared
not break;
Till notice of a change in the dark
world
Was lispt about the acacias, and a
bird,
That early woke to feed her little
ones,
Sent from a dewy breast a cry for
light:
She moved, and at her feet the vol-
ume fell.

'Blame not thyself too much,' I
 said, 'nor blame
 Too much the sons of men and bar-
 barous laws ;
 These were the rough ways of the
 world till now.
 Henceforth thou hast a helper, me,
 that know
 The woman's cause is man's : they
 rise or sink
 Together, dwarf'd or godlike, bond or
 free :
 For she that out of Lethe scales with
 man
 The shining steps of Nature, shares
 with man
 His nights, his days, moves with him
 to one goal,
 Stays all the fair young planet in her
 hands—
 If she be small, slight-natured, miser-
 able,
 How shall men grow? but work no
 more alone!
 Our place is much : as far as in us
 lies
 We two will serve them both in aid-
 ing her—
 Will clear away the parasitic forms
 That seem to keep her up but drag
 her down—
 Will leave her space to burgeon out
 of all
 Within her—let her make herself her
 own
 To give or keep, to live and learn and
 be
 All that not harms distinctive woman-
 hood.
 For woman is not undevelop't man,
 But diverse : could we make her as
 the man,
 Sweet Love were slain : his dearest
 bond is this,
 Not like to like, but like in difference.
 Yet in the long years liker must they
 grow ;
 The man be more of woman, she of
 man ;
 He gain in sweetness and in moral
 height,
 Nor lose the wrestling thews that
 throw the world ;

She mental breadth, nor fail in child-
 ward care,
 Nor lose the childlike in the larger
 mind ;
 Till at the last she set herself to man,
 Like perfect music unto noble words ;
 And so these twain, upon the skirts
 of Time,
 Sit side by side, full-summ'd in all
 their powers,
 Dispensing harvest, sowing the To-be,
 Self-reverent each and reverencing
 each,
 Distinct in individualities,
 But like each other ev'n as those who
 love.
 Then comes the statelier Eden back
 to men :
 Then reign the world's great bridal,
 chaste and calm :
 Then springs the crowning race of
 humankind.
 May these things be !'
 Sighing she spoke ' I fear
 They will not.
 ' Dear, but let us type them now
 In our own lives, and this proud
 watchword rest
 Of equal ; seeing either sex alone
 Is half itself, and in true marriage lies
 Nor equal, nor unequal : each fulfils
 Defect in each, and always thought in
 thought,
 Purpose in purpose, will in will, they
 grow,
 The single pure and perfect animal,
 The two-cell'd heart beating, with one
 full stroke,
 Life.'
 And again sighing she spoke : ' A
 dream
 That once was mine ! what woman
 taught you this ?'
 ' Alone,' I said, ' from earlier than I
 know,
 Immersed in rich foreshadowings of
 the world,
 I loved the woman : he, that doth not,
 lives
 A drowning life, besotted in sweet self,
 Or pines in sad experience worse than
 death,

Or keeps his wing'd affections clipt
with crime:
Yet was there one thro' whom I
loved her, one
Not learned, save in gracious house-
hold ways,
Not perfect, nay, but full of tender
wants,
No Angel, but a dearer being, all dipt
In Angel instincts, breathing Para-
dise,
Interpreter between the Gods and
men,
Who look'd all native to her place,
and yet
On tiptoe seem'd to touch upon a
sphere
Too gross to tread, and all male
minds perforce
Sway'd to her from their orbits as
they moved,
And girdled her with music. Happy he
With such a mother! faith in woman-
kind
Beats with his blood, and trust in all
things high
Comes easy to him, and tho' he trip
and fall
He shall not blind his soul with clay.'
'But I,'
Said Ida, tremulously, 'so all unlike—
It seems you love to cheat yourself
with words:
This mother is your model. I have
heard
Of your strange doubts: they well
might be: I seem
A mockery to my own self. Never,
Prince;
You cannot love me.'
'Nay but thee' I said
'From yearlong poring on thy
pictured eyes,
Ere seen I loved, and loved thee seen,
and saw
Thee woman thro' the crust of iron
moods
That mask'd thee from men's rever-
ence up, and forced
Sweet love on pranks of saucy boy-
hood: now,
Giv'n back to life, to life indeed, thro'
thee,

Indeed I love: the new day comes,
the light
Dearer for night, as dearer thou for
faults
Lived over: lift thine eyes; my
doubts are dead,
My haunting sense of hollow shows:
the change,
This truthful change in thee has kill'd
it. Dear,
Look up, and let thy nature strike on
mine,
Like yonder morning on the blind
half-world;
Approach and fear not; breathe upon
my brows;
In that fine air I tremble, all the past
Melts mist-like into this bright hour,
and this
Is morn to more, and all the rich to-
come
Reels, as the golden Autumn wood-
land reels
Athwart the smoke of burning weeds.
Forgive me,
I waste my heart in signs: let be.
My bride,
My wife, my life. O we will walk
this world,
Yoked in all exercise of noble end,
And so thro' those dark gates across
the wild
That no man knows. Indeed I love
thee: come,
Yield thyself up: my hopes and thine
are one:
Accomplish thou my manhood and
thyself;
Lay thy sweet hands in mine and
trust to me.'

CONCLUSION.

So closed our tale, of which I give
you all
The random scheme as wildly as it
rose:
The words are mostly mine; for
when we ceased
There came a minute's pause, and
Walter said,
'I wish she had not yielded!' then to
me,

'What, if you drest it up poetically!'
So pray'd the men, the women: I
gave assent:

Yet how to bind the scatter'd scheme
of seven

Together in one sheaf? What style
could suit?

The men required that I should give
throughout

The sort of mock-heroic gigantesque,
With which we banter'd little Lilia
first:

The women—and perhaps they felt
their power,

For something in the ballads which
they sang,

Or in their silent influence as they sat,
Had ever seem'd to wrestle with

burlesque,
And drove us, last, to quite a solemn

close—
They hated banter, wish'd for some-
thing real,

A gallant fight, a noble princess—
why

Not make her true-heroic—true-
sublime?

Or all, they said, as earnest as the
close?

Which yet with such a framework
scarce could be.

Then rose a little feud betwixt the
two,

Betwixt the mockers and the realists:
And I, betwixt them both, to please

them both,
And yet to give the story as it rose,

I moved as in a strange diagonal,
And maybe neither pleased myself

nor them.

But Lilia pleased me, for she took
no part

In our dispute: the sequel of the
tale

Had touch'd her; and she sat, she
pluck'd the grass,

She flung it from her, thinking: last,
she fixt

A showery glance upon her aunt, and
said,

'You—tell us what we are' who
might have told,

For she was cramm'd with theories
out of books,

But that there rose a shout: the gates
were closed

At sunset, and the crowd were swarm-
ing now,

To take their leave, about the garden
rails.

So I and some went out to these:
we climb'd

The slope to Vivian-place, and turn-
ing saw

The happy valleys, half in light, and
half

Far-shadowing from the west, a land
of peace;

Gray halls alone among their massive
groves;

Trim hamlets; here and there a rustic
tower

Half-lost in belts of hop and breadths
of wheat;

The shimmering glimpses of a stream;
the seas;

A red sail, or a white; and far beyond,
Imagined more than seen, the skirts

of France.

'Look there, a garden!' said my
college friend,

The Tory member's elder son, 'and
there!

God bless the narrow sea which keeps
her off,

And keeps our Britain, whole within
herself,

A nation yet, the rulers and the
ruled—

Some sense of duty, something of a
faith,

Some reverence for the laws our-
selves have made,

Some patient force to change them
when we will,

Some civic manhood firm against the
crowd—

But yonder, whiff! there comes a
sudden heat,

The gravest citizen seems to lose his
head,

The king is scared, the soldier will
not fight,

The little boys begin to shoot and stab,
A kingdom topples over with a shriek
Like an old woman, and down rolls
the world
In mock heroics stranger than our
own;
Revolts, republics, revolutions, most
No graver than a schoolboys' barring
out;
Too comic for the solemn things they
are,
Too solemn for the comic touches in
them,
Like our wild Princess with as wise a
dream
As some of theirs—God bless the
narrow seas!
I wish they were a whole Atlantic
broad.'

'Have patience.' I replied, 'our-
selves are full
Of social wrong; and maybe wildest
dreams
Are but the needful preludes of the
truth:
For me, the genial day, the happy
crowd,
The sport half-science, fill me with a
faith,
This fine old world of ours is but a
child
Yet in the go-cart. Patience! Give
it time
To learn its limbs: there is a hand
that guides.'

In such discourse we gain'd the gar-
den rails,
And there we saw Sir Walter where
he stood,
Before a tower of crimson holly-
oaks,
Among six boys, head under head, and
look'd
No little lily-handed Baronet he,
A great broad-shoulder'd genial Eng-
lishman,
A lord of fat prize-oxen and of sheep,
A raiser of huge melons and of pine,
A patron of some thirty charities,
A pamphleteer on guano and on grain.

A quarter-sessions chairman, abler
none;
Fair-hair'd and redder than a windy
morn;
Now shaking hands with him, now
him, of those
That stood the nearest—now address'd
to speech—
Who spoke few words and pithy, such
as closed
Welcome, farewell, and welcome for
the year
To follow: a shout rose again, and
made
The long line of the approaching
rookery swerve
From the elms, and shook the
branches of the deer
From slope to slope thro' distant ferns,
and rang
Beyond the bourn of sunset; O, a
shout
More joyful than the city-roar that
hails
Premier or king! Why should not
these great Sirs
Give up their parks some dozen times
a year
To let the people breathe? So thrice
they cried,
I likewise, and in groups they stream'd
away.

But we went back to the Abbey,
and sat on,
So much the gathering darkness
charm'd: we sat
But spoke not, rapt in nameless
reverie,
Perchance upon the future man: the
walls
Blacken'd about us, bats wheel'd, and
owls whoop'd,
And gradually the powers of the night,
That range above the region of the
wind,
Deepening the courts of twilight broke
them up
Thro' all the silent spaces of the
worlds,
Beyond all thought into the Heaven
of Heavens.

Last little Lillia, rising quietly,
Disrobed the glimmering statue of
Sir Ralph
From those rich silks, and home well-
pleased we went.

ODE ON THE DEATH OF THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON.

PUBLISHED IN 1852.

I.

BURY the Great Duke
With an empire's lamentation,
Let us bury the Great Duke
To the noise of the mourning of a
mighty nation,
Mourning when their leaders fall,
Warriors carry the warrior's pall,
And sorrow darkens hamlet and hall.

II.

Where shall we lay the man whom
we deplore?
Here, in streaming London's central
roar.
Let the sound of those he wrought
for,
And the feet of those he fought for,
Echo round his bones for evermore.

III.

Lead out the pageant: sad and slow,
As fits an universal woe,
Let the long long procession go,
And let the sorrowing crowd about it
grow,
And let the mournful martial music
blow;
The last great Englishman is low.

IV.

Mourn, for to us he seems the last,
Remembering all his greatness in the
Past.
No more in soldier fashion will he
greet
With lifted hand the gazer in the
street.

O friends, our chief state-oracle is
mute:
Mourn for the man of long-enduring
blood,
The statesman-warrior, moderate,
resolute,
Whole in himself, a common good.
Mourn for the man of amplest
influence,
Yet clearest of ambitious crime,
Our greatest yet with least pretence,
Great in council and great in war,
Foremost captain of his time,
Rich in saving common-sense,
And, as the greatest only are,
In his simplicity sublime.
O good gray head which all men
knew,
O voice from which their omens all
men drew,
O iron nerve to true occasion true,
O fall'n at length that tower of
strength
Which stood four-square to all the
winds that blew!
Such was he whom we deplore.
The long self-sacrifice of life is o'er.
The great World-victor's victor will
be seen no more.

V.

All is over and done:
Render thanks to the Giver,
England, for thy son.
Let the bell be toll'd.
Render thanks to the Giver,
And render him to the mould.
Under the cross of gold
That shines over city and river,
There he shall rest for ever
Among the wise and the bold.
Let the bell be toll'd:
And a reverent people behold
The towering car, the sable steeds:
Bright let it be with its blazon'd deeds,
Dark in its funeral fold.
Let the bell be toll'd:
And a deeper knell in the heart be
knoll'd;
And the sound of the sorrowing
anthem roll'd
Thro' the dome of the golden cross;

And the volleying cannon thunder his
loss;
He knew their voices of old.
For many a time in many a clime
His captain's-ear has heard them
boom
Bellowing victory, bellowing doom:
When he with those deep voices
wrought,
Guarding realms and kings from
shame;
With those deep voices our dead
captain taught
The tyrant, and asserts his claim
In that dread sound to the great name,
Which he has worn so pure of blame,
In praise and in dispraise the same,
A man of well-attemper'd frame.
O civic muse, to such a name,
To such a name for ages long,
To such a name.
Preserve a broad approach of fame,
And ever-echoing avenues of song.

VI.

Who is he that cometh, like an hon-
or'd guest,
With banner and with music, with
soldier and with priest,
With a nation weeping, and breaking
on my rest?
Mighty Seaman, this is he
Was great by land as thou by sea.
Thine island loves thee well, thou
famous man,
The greatest sailor since our world
began.
Now, to the roll of muffled drums,
To thee the greatest soldier comes;
For this is he
Was great by land as thou by sea;
His foes were thine; he kept us free;
O give him welcome, this is he
Worthy of our gorgeous rites,
And worthy to be laid by thee;
For this is England's greatest son,
He that gain'd a hundred fights,
Nor ever lost an English gun;
This is he that far away
Against the myriads of Assaye
Clash'd with his fiery few and won;
And underneath another sun,

Warring on a later day,
Round affrighted Lisbon drew
The treble works, the vast designs
Of his labor'd rampart-lines,
Where he greatly stood at bay,
Whence he issued forth anew,
And ever great and greater grew,
Beating from the wasted vines
Back to France her banded swarms,
Back to France with countless blows,
Till o'er the hills her eagles flew
Beyond the Pyrenean pines,
Follow'd up in valley and glen
With blare of bugle, clamor of men,
Roll of cannon and clash of arms,
And England pouring on her toes.
Such a war had such a close.
Again their ravening eagle rose
In anger, wheel'd on Europe-shadow-
ing wings,
And barking for the thrones of
kings;
Till one that sought but Duty's iron
crown
On that loud sabbath shook the
spoiler down;
A day of onsets of despair!
Dash'd on every rocky square
Their surging charges foam'd them-
selves away;
Last, the Prussian trumpet blew;
Thro' the long-tormented air
Heaven flash'd a sudden jubilant ray,
And down we swept and charged and
overthrew.
So great a soldier taught us there,
What long-enduring hearts could do
In that world-earthquake, Waterloo!
Mighty Seaman tender and true,
And pure as he from taint of craven
guile,
O saviour of the silver-coasted isle,
O shaker of the Baltic and the Nile,
If aught of things that here befall
Touch a spirit among things divine,
If love of country move thee there at
all,
Be glad, because his bones are laid by
thine!
And thro' the centuries let a people's
voice
In full acclaim,
A people's voice,

The proof and echo of all human
fame,
A people's voice, when they rejoice
At civic revel and pomp and game,
Attest their great commander's claim
With honor, honor, honor, honor to
him,
Eternal honor to his name.

VII.

A people's voice! we are a people
yet.
Tho' all men else their nobler dreams
forget,
Confused by brainless mobs and law-
less Powers;
Thank Him who isled us here, and
roughly set
His Briton in blown seas and storm-
ing showers,
We have a voice, with which to pay
the debt
Of boundless love and reverence and
regret
To those great men who fought, and
kept it ours.
And keep it ours, O God, from brute
control;
O Statesmen, guard us, guard the eye,
the soul
Of Europe, keep our noble England
whole,
And save the one true seed of free-
dom sown
Betwixt a people and their ancient
throne,
That sober freedom out of which
there springs
Our loyal passion for our temperate
kings;
For, saying that, ye help to save man-
kind
Till public wrong be crumbled into
dust,
And drill the raw world for the march
of mind,
Till crowds at length be sane and
crowns be just.
But wink no more in slothful over-
trust.
Remember him who led your hosts;
He bad you guard the sacred coasts.

Your cannons moulder on the sea-
ward wall;
His voice is silent in your council
hall

For ever; and whatever tempests lour
For ever silent; even if they broke
In thunder, silent; yet remember all
He spoke among you, and the Man
who spoke;
Who never sold the truth to serve the
hour,
Nor palter'd with Eternal God for
power;
Who let the turbid streams of rumor
flow
Thro' either babbling world of high
and low;
Whose life was work, whose language
rife
With rugged maxims hewn from life;
Who never spoke against a foe;
Whose eighty winters freeze with one
rebuke
All great self-seekers trampling on
the right;
Truth-teller was our England's Alfred
named;
Truth-lover was our English Duke;
Whatever record leap to light
He never shall be ashamed.

VIII.

Lo, the leader in these glorious wars
Now to glorious burial slowly borne,
Follow'd by the brave of other lands,
He, on whom from both her open
hands
Lavish Honor shower'd all her
stars,
And affluent Fortune emptied all her
horn.
Vea, let all good things await
Him who cares not to be great,
But as he saves or serves the state.
Not once or twice in our rough
island-story,
The path of duty was the way to
glory:
He that walks it, only thirsting
For the right, and learns to deaden
Love of self, before his journey
closes,

He shall find the stubborn thistle
bursting
Into glossy purples, which outredden
All voluptuous garden-roses.
Not once or twice in our fair island-
story,
The path of duty was the way to
glory :
He, that ever following her com-
mands,
On with toil of heart and knees and
hands,
Thro' the long gorge to the far light
has won
His path upward, and prevail'd,
Shall find the toppling crags of Duty
scaled
Are close upon the shining table-lands
To which our God Himself is moon
and sun.
Such was he : his work is done.
But while the races of mankind en-
dure,
Let his great example stand
Colossal, seen of every land,
And keep the soldier firm, the
statesman pure :
Till in all lands and thro' all human
story
The path of duty be the way to glory :
And let the land whose hearths he
saved from shame
For many and many an age proclaim
At civic revel and pomp and game,
And when the long-illuminated cities
flame,
Their ever-loyal iron leader's fame,
With honor, honor, honor, honor to
him,
Eternal honor to his name.

IX.

Peace, his triumph will be sung
By some yet un moulded tongue
Far on in summers that we shall not
see :
Peace, it is a day of pain
For one about whose patriarchal knee
Late the little children clung :
O peace, it is a day of pain
For one, upon whose hand and heart
and brain

Once the weight and fate of Europe
hung.
Ours the pain, be his the gain !
More than is of man's degree
Must be with us, watching here
At this, our great solemnity.
Whom we see not we revere ;
We revere, and we refrain
From talk of battles loud and vain,
And brawling memories all too free
For such a wise humility
As befits a solemn fane :
We revere, and while we hear
The tides of Music's golden sea
Setting toward eternity,
Uplifted high in heart and hope are we,
Until we doubt not that for one so
true
There must be other nobler work to
do
Than when he fought at Waterloo,
And Victor he must ever be.
For tho' the Giant Ages heave the
hill
And break the shore, and evermore
Make and break, and work their will ;
Tho' world on world in myriad myriads
roll
Round us, each with different powers,
And other forms of life than ours,
What know we greater than the soul ?
On God and Godlike men we build
our trust.
Hush, the Dead March wails in the
people's ears :
The dark crowd moves, and there are
sobs and tears :
The black earth yawns : the mortal
disappears ;
Ashes to ashes, dust to dust ;
He is gone who seem'd so great.—
Gone ; but nothing can bereave him
Of the force he made his own
Being here, and we believe him
Something far advanced in State,
And that he wears a truer crown
Than any wreath that man can weave
him.
Speak no more of his renown,
Lay your earthly fancies down,
And in the vast cathedral leave him,
God accept him, Christ receive him.

THE THIRD OF FEBRUARY,

1852.

My Lords, we heard you speak : you
told us all
That England's honest censure went
too far ;
That our free press should cease to
brawl,
Not sting the fiery Frenchman into
war.
It was our ancient privilege, my Lords,
To fling whate'er we felt, not fearing,
into words.

We love not this French God, the
child of Hell,
Wild War, who breaks the converse
of the wise ;
But though we love kind Peace so
well,
We dare not ev'n by silence sanc-
tion lies.
It might be safe our censures to with-
draw ;
And yet, my Lords, not well : there is
a higher law.

As long as we remain, we must speak
free,
Tho' all the storm of Europe on us
break ;
No little German state are we,
But the one voice in Europe : we
must speak ;
That if to-night our greatness were
struck dead,
There might be left some record of the
things we said.

If you be fearful, then must we be bold.
Our Britain cannot save a tyrant
o'er.
Better the waste Atlantic roll'd
On her and us and ours for ever-
more.
What! have we fought for Freedom
from our prime,

At last to dodge and palter with a
public crime ?

Shall we fear *him* ? our own we never
fear'd.
From our first Charles by force we
wrung our claims.
Prick'd by the Papal spur, we rear'd,
We flung the burthen of the second
James.
I say, we *never* feared! and as for
these,
We broke them on the land, we drove
them on the seas.

And you, my Lords, you make the
people muse
In doubt if you be of our Barons'
breed—
Were those your sires who fought at
Lewes?
Is this the manly strain of Runny-
mede ?
O fall'n nobility, that, overawed,
Would lisp in honey'd whispers of this
monstrous fraud!

We feel, at least, that silence here
were sin,
Not ours the fault if we have feeble
hosts—
If easy patrons of their kin
Have left the last free race with
naked coasts!
They knew the precious things they
had to guard :
For us, we will not spare the tyrant
one hard word.

Tho' niggard throats of Manchester
may bawl,
What England was, shall her true
sons forget?
We are not cotton-spinners all,
But some love England and her
honor yet.
And these in our Thermopylæ shall
stand,
And hold against the world this honor
of the land.

THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT
BRIGADE.

I.

Half a league, half a league,
Half a league onward,
All in the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.
Forward, the Light Brigade!
Charge for the guns! ' he said :
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

II.

' Forward, the Light Brigade! '
Was there a man dismay'd ?
Not tho' the soldier knew
Some one had blunder'd :
Their's not to make reply,
Their's not to reason why,
Their's but to do and die :
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

III.

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon in front of them
Volley'd and thunder'd ;
Storm'd at with shot and shell,
Boldly they rode and well,
Into the jaws of Death,
Into the mouth of Hell
Rode the six hundred.

IV.

Flash'd all their sabres bare,
Flash'd as they turn'd in air
Sabring the gunners there,
Charging an army, while
All the world wonder'd :
Plunged in the battery-smoke
Right thro' the line they broke ;
Cossack and Russian
Reel'd from the sabre-stroke
Shatter'd and sunder'd
Then they rode back, but not
Not the six hundred.

V.

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon behind them
Volley'd and thunder'd ;
Storm'd at with shot and shell,
While horse and hero fell,
They that had fought so well
Came thro' the jaws of Death,
Back from the mouth of Hell,
All that was left of them,
Left of six hundred.

VI.

When can their glory fade ?
O the wild charge they made!
All the world wonder'd.
Honor the charge they made!
Honor the Light Brigade,
Noble six hundred!

ODE SUNG AT THE OPENING
OF THE INTERNATIONAL
EXHIBITION.

I.

UPLIFT a thousand voices full and
sweet,
In this wide hall with earth's in-
vention stored,
And praise the invisible universal
Lord,
Who lets once more in peace the
nations meet,
Where Science, Art, and Labor
have outpour'd
Their myriad horns of plenty at our
feet.

II.

O silent father of our Kings to be
Mourn'd in this golden hour of jubilee,
For this, for all, we weep our thanks
to thee!

III.

The world-compelling plan was
thine,—
And, lo! the long laborious miles

Of Palace ; lo ! the giant aisles,
 Rich in model and design ;
 Harvest-tool and husbandry,
 Loom and wheel and enginery,
 Secrets of the sullen mine,
 Steel and gold, and corn and wine,
 Fabric rough, or fairy-fine,
 Sunny tokens of the Line,
 Polar marvels, and a feast
 Of wonder, out of West and East,
 And shapes and hues of Art divine !
 All of beauty, all of use,
 That one fair planet can produce,
 Brought from under every star,
 Blown from over every main,
 And mixt, as life is mixt with pain,
 The works of peace with works of war.

IV.

Is the goal so far away ?
 Far, how far no tongue can say,
 Let us dream our dream to-day.

V.

O ye, the wise who think, the wise
 who reign,
 From growing commerce loose her
 latest chain,
 And let the fair white-wing'd peace-
 maker fly
 To happy havens under all the sky,
 And mix the seasons and the golden
 hours ;
 Till each man find his own in all men's
 good,
 And all men work in noble brother-
 hood,
 Breaking their mailed fleets and armed
 towers,
 And ruling by obeying Nature's
 powers,
 And gathering all the fruits of earth
 and crown'd with all her flowers.

A WELCOME TO ALEXANDRA.

MARCH 7, 1863.

SEA-KINGS' daughter from over the
 sea,

Alexandra !

Saxon and Norman and Dane are
 we,
 But all of us Danes in our welcome of
 thee,

Alexandra !

Welcome her, thunders of fort and of
 fleet !

Welcome her, thundering cheer of the
 street !

Welcome her, all things youthful and
 sweet,

Scatter the blossom under her feet !

Break, happy land, into earlier flow-
 ers !

Make music, O bird, in the new-bud-
 ded bowers !

Blazon your mottoes of blessing and
 prayer !

Welcome her, welcome her, all that is
 ours !

Warble, O bugle, and trumpet, blare !

Flags, flutter out upon turrets and
 towers !

Flames, on the windy headland flare !

Utter your jubilee, steeple and spire !

Clash, ye bells, in the merry March
 air !

Flash, ye cities, in rivers of fire !

Rush to the roof, sudden rocket, and
 higher

Melt into stars for the land's desire !

Roll and rejoice, jubilant voice,

Roll as a ground-swell dash'd on the
 strand,

Roar as the sea when he welcomes
 the land,

And welcome her, welcome the land's
 desire,

The sea-kings' daughter as happy as
 fair,

Blissful bride of a blissful heir,

Bride of the heir of the kings of the
 sea—

O joy to the people and joy to the
 throne,

Come to us, love us and make us your
 own :

For Saxon or Dane or Norman we,

Teuton or Celt, or whatever we be,
 We are each all Dane in our welcome
 of thee,

Alexandra !

A WELCOME TO HER ROYAL
HIGHNESS MARIE ALEX-
ANDROVNA, DUCHESS OF
EDINBURGH.

MARCH 7, 1874.

I.

THE Son of him with whom we strove
for power—
Whose will is lord thro' all his
world-domain—
Who made the serf a man, and
burst his chain—
Has given our Prince his own imper-
ial Flower,
Alexandrovna.
And welcome, Russian flower, a peo-
ple's pride,
To Britain, when her flowers begin
to blow!
From love to love, from home to
home you go,
From mother unto mother, stately
bride,
Marie Alexandrovna!

II.

The golden news along the steppes is
blown,
And at thy name the Tartar tents
are stirr'd;
Elburz and all the Caucasus have
heard;
And all the sultry palms of India
known,
Alexandrovna.
The voices of our universal sea
On capes of Afric as on cliffs of Kent,
The Maoris and that Isle of Con-
tinent,
And loyal pines of Canada murmur
thee,
Marie Alexandrovna!

III.

Fair empires branching, both, in lusty
life!—
Yet Harold's England fell to Nor-
man swords;

Yet thine own land has bow'd to
Tartar hordes
Since English Harold gave its throne
a wife,

Alexandrovna!

For thrones and peoples are as waifs
that swing,
And float or fall, in endless ebb and
flow;
But who love best have best the
grace to know
That Love by right divine is death-
less king,

Marie Alexandrovna!

IV.

And Love has led thee to the stranger
land,
Where men are bold and strongly
say their say;—
See, empire upon empire smiles to-
day,
As thou with thy young lover hand in
hand

Alexandrovna!

So now thy fuller life is in the west,
Whose hand at home was gracious
to thy poor:
Thy name was blest within the
narrow door;
Here also, Marie, shall thy name be
blest, Marie Alexandrovna!

V.

Shall fears and jealous hatreds flame
again?
Or at thy coming, Princess, every-
where,
The blue heaven break, and some
diviner air
Breathe thro' the world and change
the hearts of men,
Alexandrovna?
But hearts that change not, love that
cannot cease,
And peace be yours, the peace of
soul in soul!
And howsoever this wild world may
roll,
Between your peoples truth and man-
ful peace,
Alfred—Alexandrovna!

THE GRANDMOTHER.

I.

AND Willy, my eldest-born, is gone, you say, little Anne?
Ruddy and white, and strong on his legs, he looks like a man.
And Willy's wife has written: she never was over-wise,
Never the wife for Willy: he wouldn't take my advice.

II.

For, Annie, you see, her father was not the man to save,
Hadn't a head to manage, and drank himself into his grave.
Pretty enough, very pretty! but I was against it for one.
Eh!—but he wouldn't hear me—and Willy, you say, is gone.

III.

Willy, my beauty, my eldest-born, the flower of the flock;
Never a man could fling him: for Willy stood like a rock.
'Here's a leg for a babe of a week!' says doctor; and he would be bound,
There was not his like that year in twenty parishes round.

IV.

Strong of his hands, and strong on his legs, but still of his tongue!
I ought to have gone before him: I wonder he went so young.
I cannot cry for him, Annie: I have not long to stay;
Perhaps I shall see him the sooner, for he lived far away.

V.

Why do you look at me, Annie? you think I am hard and cold;
But all my children have gone before me, I am so old:
I cannot weep for Willy, nor can I weep for the rest;
Only at your age, Annie, I could have wept with the best.

VI.

For I remember a quarrel I had with your father, my dear,
All for a slanderous story, that cost me many a tear.
I mean your grandfather, Annie: it cost me a world of woe,
Seventy years ago, my darling, seventy years ago.

VII.

For Jenny, my cousin, had come to the place, and I knew right well
That Jenny had tript in her time: I knew, but I would not tell.
And she to be coming and slandering me, the base little liar!
But the tongue is a fire as you know, my dear, the tongue is a fire.



"MELISSA, WITH HER HAND UPON THE LOCK."—Page 43.



VIII.

And the parson made it his text that week, and he said likewise,
That a lie which is half a truth is ever the blackest of lies,
That a lie which is all a lie may be met and fought with outright,
But a lie which is part a truth is a harder matter to fight.

IX.

And Willy had not been down to the farm for a week and a day;
And all things look'd half-dead, tho' it was the middle of May.
Jenny, to slander me, who knew what Jenny had been!
But soiling another, Annie, will never make oneself clean.

X.

And I cried myself well-nigh blind, and all of an evening late
I climb'd to the top of the garth, and stood by the road at the gate.
The moon like a rick on fire was rising over the dale,
And whit, whit, whit, in the bush beside me chirrup the nightingale.

XI.

All of a sudden he stopt: there past by the gate of the farm,
Willy,—he didn't see me,—and Jenny hung on his arm.
Out into the road I started, and spoke I scarce knew how;
Ah, there's no fool like the old one—it makes me angry now.

XII.

Willy stood up like a man, and look'd the thing that he meant;
Jenny, the viper, made me a mocking curtsy and went.
And I said, 'Let us part: in a hundred years it'll all be the same,
You cannot love me at all, if you love not my good name.'

XIII.

And he turn'd, and I saw his eyes all wet, in the sweet moonshine:
'Sweetheart, I love you so well that your good name is mine.
And what do I care for Jane, let her speak of you well or ill;
But marry me out of hand: we two shall be happy still.'

XIV.

'Marry you, Willy!' said I, 'but I needs must speak my mind,
And I fear you'll listen to tales, be jealous and hard and unkind.'
But he turn'd and claspt me in his arms, and answer'd, 'No, love, no;
Seventy years ago, my darling, seventy years ago.'

XV.

So Willy and I were wedded: I wore a lilac gown;
And the ringers rang with a will, and he gave the ringers a crown.
But the first that ever I bare was dead before he was born,
Shadow and shine is life, little Annie, flower and thorn.

XVI.

That was the first time, too, that ever I thought of death.
There lay the sweet little body that never had drawn a breath.
I had not wept, little Anne, not since I had been a wife ;
But I wept like a child that day, for the babe had fought for his life.

XVII.

His dear little face was troubled, as if with anger or pain :
I look'd at the still little body—his trouble had all been in vain.
For Willy I cannot weep, I shall see him another morn :
But I wept like a child for the child that was dead before he was born.

XVIII.

But he cheer'd me, my good man, for he seldom said me nay :
Kind, like a man, was he ; like a man, too, would have his way :
Never jealous—not he : we had many a happy year ;
And he died, and I could not weep—my own time seem'd so near.

XIX.

But I wish'd it had been God's will that I, too, then could have died :
I began to be tired a little, and fain had slept at his side.
And that was ten years back, or more, if I don't forget :
But as to the children, Annie, they're all about me yet.

XX.

Pattering over the boards, my Annie who left me at two,
Patter she goes, my own little Annie, an Annie like you :
Pattering over the boards, she comes and goes at her will,
While Harry is in the five-acre and Charlie ploughing the hill.

XXI.

And Harry and Charlie, I hear them too—they sing to their team :
Often they come to the door in a pleasant kind of a dream.
They come and sit by my chair, they hover about my bed—
I am not always certain if they be alive or dead.

XXII.

And yet I know for a truth, there's none of them left alive ;
For Harry went at sixty, your father at sixty-five :
And Willy, my eldest-born, at nigh threescore and ten ;
I knew them all as babies, and now they're elderly men.

XXIII.

For mine is a time of peace, it is not often I grieve ;
I am oftener sitting at home in my father's farm at eve :
And the neighbors come and laugh and gossip, and so do I ;
I find myself often laughing at things that have long gone by.

XXI

To be sure the preacher says, our sins should make us sad :
But mine is a time of peace, and there is Grace to be had ;
And God, not man, is the Judge of us all when life shall cease :
And in this Book, little Annie, the message is one of Peace.

XXV.

And age is a time of peace, so it be free from pain,
And happy has been my life ; but I would not live it again.
I seem to be tired a little, that's all, and long for rest ;
Only at your age, Annie, I could have wept with the best.

XXVI.

So Willy has gone, my beauty, my eldest-born, my flower,
But how can I weep for Willy, he has but gone for an hour,—
Gone for a minute, my son, from this room into the next ;
I, too, shall go in a minute. What time have I to be vex't ?

XXVII.

And Willy's wife has written, she never was over-wise.
Get me my glasses, Annie : thank God that I keep my eyes.
There is but a trifle left you, when I shall have past away.
But stay with the old woman now : you cannot have long to stay.

NORTHERN FARMER.

OLD STYLE.

I.

WHEER 'asta beän saw long and meä liggin' 'ere aloän ?
Noorse ? thourt nowt o' a noorse : whoy, Doctor's abeän an' agoän :
Says that I moänt 'a naw moor aäle : but I beänt a fool :
Git ma my aäle, fur I beänt a-gawin' to bræk my rule.

II.

Doctors, they knaws nowt, fur a says what's nawways true :
Naw soort o' koind o' use to säy the things that a do.
I've 'ed my point o' aäle ivry noight sin' I beän 'ere.
An' I've 'ed my quart ivry market-noight for foorty year.

III.

Parson's a beän loikewise, an' a sittin' 'ere o' my bed.
' The amoighty's a taäkin o' you ' to 'issén, my friend,' a said,
An' a towd ma my sins, an's toithe were due, an' I gied it in hond ;
I done moy duty boy 'um, as I' a done boy the lond.

¹ ou as in hour.

IV.

Larn'd a ma' beä. I reckons I 'annot sa mooch to larn.
 But a cast oop, thot a did, 'bout Bessy Marris's barne.
 Thaw a knaws I hallus voätet wi' Squoire an' choorch an' staäte,
 An' i' the woost o' toimes I wur niver agin the raäte.

V.

An' I hallus coom'd to 's chooch afoor moy Sally wur deääd,
 An' 'eärd 'um a bummin' awaäy loike a buzzard-clock ¹ ower my 'eääd,
 An' I niver knaw'd whot a meän'd but I thowt a 'ad summut to saäy,
 An' I thowt a said whot a owt to 'a said an' I coom'd awaäy.

VI.

Bessy Marris's barne! tha knaws she laäid it to meä.
 Mowt a beän, mayhap, for she wur a bad un, sheä.
 'Siver, I kep 'um, I kep 'um, my lass, tha mun understand;
 I done moy duty boy 'um as I 'a done boy the lond.

VII.

But Parson a cooms an' a goäs, an' a says it eäsy an' freeä
 'The amoighty's a taäkin o' you to 'issén, my friend,' says 'eä.
 I weänt säay men be loiars, thaw summun said it in 'aäste:
 But 'e reäds wonn sarmin a weäk, an' I 'a stubb'd Thurnaby waäste.

VIII.

D'ya moind the waäste, my lass? naw, tha was not born then;
 Theer wur a boggle in it, I often 'eärd 'um mysen;
 Moäst loike a butter-bump,² fur I 'eärd 'um about an' about,
 But I stubb'd 'um oop wi' the lot, an' raäved an' rembled 'um out.

IX.

Keäper's it wur; fo' they fun 'um theer a-laäid of 'is faäce
 Down i' the woild 'enemies³ afoor I coom'd to the plaäce.
 Noäks or Thimbleby—toäner⁴ 'ed shot 'um as deääd as a naail
 Noäks wur 'ang'd for it oop at 'soize—but git ma my aäle.

X.

Dubbut looök at the waäste: theer warn't not feeääd för a cow;
 Nowt at all but bracken an' fuzz, an' looök at it now—
 Warnt worth nowt a haäcre, an' now theer's lots o' feeääd,
 Fourscoor⁵ yows upon it an' some on it down i' seeääd.⁶

XI.

Nobbut a bit on it's left, an' I meän'd to 'a stubb'd it at fall,
 Done it ta-year I meän'd, an' runn'd plow thruff it an' all,
 If godamoighty an' parson 'ud nobbut let ma aloän.
 Meä, wi' haäte hoonderd haäcre o' Squoire's, an' lond o' my oän.

¹ Cockchafer. ² Bittern. ³ Anemones. ⁴ One or other. ⁵ ou as in hour. ⁶ Clover.

XII.

Do godamoighty knaw what a's doing a-taäkin' o' meä?
I beänt wonn as saws 'ere a beän an' yonder a peä;
An' Squire 'ull be sa mad an' all—a' dear a' dear!
And I 'a managed for Squire coom Michaelmas thutty year.

XIII.

A mowt 'a taäen owd Joänes, as 'ant not a 'aäpoth o' sense,
Or a mowt 'a taäen young Robins—a niver mended a fence:
But godamoighty a moost taäke meä an' taäke ma now
Wi' aäf the cows to cauve an' Thurnaby hoälm to plow!

XIV.

Looök 'aw quoloty smoles when they seeäs ma a passin' boy,
Says to thessen naw doubt 'what a man a beä sewer-loj!'
Fur they knaws what I beän to Squire sin fust a coom'd to the 'All;
I done moy duty by Squire an' I done moy duty boy hall.

Squire's i' Lunnon, an' summun I reckons 'ull 'a to wroite,
For whoä's to howd the lond ater meä thot muddles ma quoit;
Sartin-sewer I beä, thot a weänt niver give it to Joänes,
Naw, nor a moänt to Robins—a niver rembles the stoäns.

XVI.

But summun 'ull come ater meä mayhap wi' 'is kittle o' steäm
Huzzin' an' maäzin' the blessed feälds wi' the Devil's oän teäm.
Sin' I mun doy I mun doy, thaw loife they says is sweet,
But sin' I mun doy I mun doy, for I couldn abeär to see it.

XVII.

What atta stannin' theer fur, an' doesn bring ma the aäle?
Doctor's a 'toättler, lass, an' a's hallus i' the owd taäle;
I weänt breäk rules fur Doctor, a knaws naw moor nor a floy;
Git ma my aäle I tell tha, an' if I mun doy I mun doy.

NORTHERN FARMER.

NEW STYLE.

I.

Dosn't thou 'ear my 'erse's legs, as they canters awaäy?
Proputty, proputty, proputty—that's what l 'ears 'em saäy.
Proputty, proputty, proputty—Sam, thou's an ass for thy paaäns:
Theer's moor sense i' one o' 'is legs nor in all thy braaäns.

II.

Woä—theer's a craw to pluck wi' tha, Sam : yon's parson's 'ouse—
 Doesn't thou know that a man mun be eäther a man or a mouse ?
 Time to think on it then ; for thou'll be twenty to weeäk.¹
 Proputty, proputty—woä then woä—let ma 'ear mysén speäk.

III.

Me an' thy muther, Sammy, 'as bñan a-talkin' o' thee ;
 Thou's beän talkin' to muther, an' she beän a tellin' it me.
 Thou'll not marry for munny—thou's sweet upo' parson's lass—
 Noä—thou'll marry for luvv—an' we boäth on us thinks tha an ass.

IV.

Seeä'd her to-daäy goä by—Saäint's-daäy—they was ringing the bells.
 She's a beauty thou thinks—an' soä is scoors o' gells,
 Them as' as munny an' all—wot's a beauty?—the flower as blows.
 But proputty, proputty sticks, an' proputty, proputty graws.

V.

Do'ant be stunt : ² taäke time : I knows what maäkes tha sa mad.
 Warn't I craäzed fur the lasses mysén when I wur a lad ?
 But I know'd a Quaäker feller as often 'as tow'd ma this :
 'Doänt thou marry for munny, but goä wheer munny is !'

VI.

An' I went wheer munny war : an' thy muther coom to 'and,
 Wi' lots o' munny laaid by, an' a nicetish bit o' land.
 Maäybe she warn't a beauty :—I niver giv it a thowt—
 But warn't she as good to cuddle an' kiss as a lass as 'ant nowt ?

VII.

Parson's lass 'ant nowt, an' she weänt 'a nowt when 'e's deäd,
 Mun be a guvness, lad, or summut, and addle ³ her breäd :
 Why? fur 'e's nobbut a curate, an' weänt niver git hissen clear,
 An' 'e maäde the bed as 'e ligs on afoor 'e coom'd to the shere.

VIII.

'An thin 'e coom'd to the parish wi' lots o' Varsity debt,
 Stook to his taail they did, an' 'e 'ant got shut on 'em yet.
 An' 'e ligs on 'is back i' the grip, wi' noän to lend 'im a shuvv,
 Woorse nor a far-welter'd ⁴ yowe : fur, Sammy, 'e married fur luvv.

¹ This week.² Obstinate.³ Earn.⁴ Or fow-welter'd,—said of a sheep lying on its back.

IX.

Luvv? what's luvv? thou can luvv thy lass an' 'er munny too,
Maakin' 'em goä together as they've good right to do.
Could'n I luvv thy muther by cause o' 'er munny laaid by?
Naäy—fur I luvv'd 'er a vast sight moor fur it: reäson why.

X.

Ay an' thy muther says thou wants to marry the lass,
Cooms of a gentleman burn: an' we boäth on us thinks tha an ass.
Woä then, proputtu, wiltha?—an ass as near as mays nowt!¹—
Woä then, wiltha? dangtha!—the bees is as fell as owt.²

XI.

Breäk me a bit o' the esh for his 'eäd, lad, out o' the fence!
Gentleman burn! what's gentleman burn? is it shillins an' pence?
Proputtu, proputtu's ivrything 'ere, an', Sammy, I'm blest
If it isn't the saäme oop yonder, fur them as 'as it's the best.

XII.

Tis'n them as 'as munny as breäks into 'ouses an' steäls,
Them as 'as coäts to their backs an' taäkes their regular meäls.
Noä, but it's them as niver knaws wheer a meäl's to be 'ad.
Taäke my word for it, Sammy, the poor in a loomp is bad.

XIII.

Them or thir feythurs, tha sees, mun 'a beän a laäzy lot,
Fur work mun a 'gone to the gittin' whiniver munny was got.
Feyther 'ad ammost nowt; leästways 'is munny was 'id.
But 'e tued an moil'd' 'issén deäd, an 'e died a good un, 'e did.

XIV.

Looök thou theer wheer Wigglesby beck cooms out by the 'ill!
Feyther run oop to the farm, an' I runs oop to the mill;
An' I'll run oop to the brig, an' that thou'll live to see;
And if thou marries a good un I'll leäve the land to thee.

XV.

Thim's my noätions, Sammy, wheerby I means to stick;
But if thou marries a bad un, I'll leäve the land to Dick.—
Coom oop, proputtu, proputtu—that's what I 'ears 'im saäy—
Proputtu, proputtu, proputtu—canter 'an canter awaäy.

¹ Makes nothing.

² The flies are as fierce as anything.

THE DAISY.

WRITTEN AT EDINBURGH.

O LOVE, what hours were thine and mine,
In lands of palm and southern pine ;
In lands of palm, of orange-blossom,
Of olive, aloe, and maize and vine.

What Roman strength Turbia show'd
In ruin, by the mountain road ;
How like a gem, beneath, the city
Of little Monaco, basking, glow'd.

How richly down the rocky dell
The torrent vineyard streaming fell
To meet the sun and sunny waters,
That only heaved with a summer swell.

What slender campanili grew
By bays, the peacock's neck in hue ;
Where, here and there, on sandy
beaches
A milky-bell'd amaryllis blew.

How young Columbus seem'd to rove,
Yet present in his natal grove,
Now watching high on mountain
cornice,
And steering, now, from a purple cove,

Now pacing mute by ocean's rim ;
Till, in a narrow street and dim,
I stay'd the wheels at Cogoletto,
And drank, and loyally drank to him.

Nor knew we well what pleased us
most,
Not the clipt palm of which they
boast ;

But distant color, happy hamlet,
A moulder'd citadel on the coast,

Or tower, or high hill-convent, seen
A light amid its olives green ;
Or olive-hoary cape in ocean ;
Or rosy blossom in hot ravine,

Where oleanders flush'd the bed
Of silent torrents, gravel-spread ;

And, crossing, oft we saw the
glisten
Of ice, far up on a mountain head.

We loved that hall, tho' white and
cold,
Those niched shapes of noble mould,
A princely people's awful princes,
The grave, severe Genovese of old.

At Florence too what golden hours,
In those long galleries, were ours ;
What drives about the fresh Cas-
cinè,
Or walks in Boboli's ducal bowers.

In bright vignettes, and each com-
plete,
Of tower or duomo, sunny-sweet,
Or palace, how the city glitter'd,
Thro' cypress avenues, at our feet.

But when we crost the Lombard plain
Remember what a plague of rain ;
Of rain at Reggio, rain at Parma ;
At Lodi, rain, Piacenza, rain.

And stern and sad (so rare the smiles
Of sunlight) look'd the Lombard
piles ;
Porch-pillars on the lion resting,
And sombre, old, colonnaded aisles.

O Milan, O the chanting quires,
The giant windows' blazon'd fires,
The height, the space, the gloom,
the glory !
A mount of marble, a hundred spires !

I climb'd the roofs at break of day ;
Sun-smitten Alps before me lay.
I stood among the silent statues,
And statued pinnacles, mute as they.

How faintly-flush'd, how phantom-
fair,
Was Monte Rosa, hanging there
A thousand shadowy-pencill'd val-
leys
And snowy dells in a golden air.

Remember how we came at last
To Como ; shower and storm and
blast

Had blown the lake beyond his
limit,
And all was flooded; and how we
past

From Como, when the light was gray,
And in my head, for half the day,
The rich Virgilian rustic measure
Of Lari Maxumie, all the way,

Like ballad-burthen music, kept,
As on The Lariano crept
To that fair port below the castle
Of Queen Theodolind, where we
slept;

Or hardly slept, but watch'd awake
A cypress in the moonlight shake.
The moonlight touching o'er a ter-
race
One tall Agavè above the lake.

What more? we took our last adieu,
And up the snowy Splügen drew,
But ere we reach'd the highest
summit
I pluck'd a daisy, I gave it you.

It told of England then to me,
And now it tells of Italy.
O love, we two shall go no longer
To lands of summer across the sea;

So dear a life your arms enfold
Whose crying is a cry for gold:
Yet here to-night in this dark city,
When ill and weary, alone and cold,

I found, tho' crush'd to hard and dry,
This nurseling of another sky
Still in the little book you lent me,
And where you tenderly laid it by:

And I forgot the clouded Forth,
The gloom that saddens Heaven and
Earth,

The bitter east, the misty summer
And gray metropolis of the North.

Perchance, to lull the throbs of pain,
Perchance, to charm a vacant brain,
Perchance, to dream you still beside
me,

My fancy fled to the South again.

TO THE REV. F. D. MAURICE.

COME, when no graver cares employ,
Godfather, come and see your boy:
Your presence will be sun in win-
ter,
Making the little one leap for joy.

For, being of that honest few,
Who give the Fiend himself his due,
Should eighty-thousand college-
councils
Thunder 'Anathema,' friend, at you;

Should all our churchmen foam in
spite
At you, so careful of the right,
Yet one lay-hearth would give you
welcome
(Take it and come) to the Isle of
Wight;

Where, far from noise and smoke of
town,
I watch the twilight falling brown
All round a careless-order'd garden
Close to the ridge of a noble down.

You'll have no scandal while you
dine,
But honest talk and wholesome wine,
And only hear the magpie gossip
Garrulous under a roof of pine:

For groves of pine on either hand,
To break the blast of winter, stand;
And further on, the hoary Channel
Tumbles a billow on chalk and sand;

Where, if below the milky steep
Some ship of battle slowly creep,
And on thro' zones of light and
shadow
Glimmer away to the lonely deep,

We might discuss the Northern sin
Which made a selfish war begin;
Dispute the claims, arrange the
chances;
Emperor, Ottoman, which shall win:

Or whether war's avenging rod
 Shall lash all Europe into blood;
 Till you should turn to dearer mat-
 ters,
 Dear to the man that is dear to God;

How best to help the slender store,
 How mend the dwellings, of the poor;
 How gain in life, as life advances,
 Valor and charity more and more.

Come, Maurice, come: the lawn as
 yet

Is hoar with rime, or spongy-wet;
 But when the wreath of March has
 blossom'd,

Crocus, anemone, violet,

Or later, pay one visit here,
 For those are few we hold as dear;
 Nor pay but one, but come for
 many,
 Many and many a happy year.

January, 1854.

WILL.

I.

O WELL for him whose will is strong!
 He suffers, but he will not suffer
 long;
 He suffers, but he cannot suffer
 wrong:
 For him nor moves the loud world's
 random mock,
 Nor all Calamity's hugest waves con-
 found,
 Who seems a promontory of rock,
 That, compass'd round with turbulent
 sound,
 In middle ocean meets the surging
 shock,
 Tempest-buffed, citadel-crown'd.

II.

But ill for him who, bettering not
 with time,
 Corrupts the strength of heaven-de-
 scended Will,

And ever weaker grows thro' acted
 crime,
 Or seeming-genial venial fault,
 Recurring and suggesting still!
 He seems as one whose footsteps halt,
 Toiling in immeasurable sand,
 And o'er a weary sultry land,
 Far beneath a blazing vault,
 Sown in a wrinkle of the monstrous
 hill,
 The city sparkles like a grain of salt.

IN THE VALLEY OF CAUTERETZ.

ALL along the valley, stream that
 flashest white,
 Deepening thy voice with the deepen-
 ing of the night,
 All along the valley, where thy waters
 flow,
 I walk'd with one I loved two and
 thirty years ago.
 All along the valley, while I walk'd
 to-day,
 The two and thirty years were a mist
 that rolls away;
 For all along the valley, down thy
 rocky bed,
 Thy living voice to me was as the
 voice of the dead,
 And all along the valley, by rock and
 cave and tree,
 The voice of the dead was a living
 voice to me.

IN THE GARDEN AT SWAINSTON.

NIGHTINGALES warbled without,
 Within was weeping for thee:
 Shadows of three dead men
 Walk'd in the walks with me,
 Shadows of three dead men and
 thou wast one of the three.

Nightingales sang in his woods:
 The Master was far away:
 Nightingales warbled and sang
 Of a passion that lasts but a day;

Still in the house in his coffin the
Prince of courtesy lay.

Two dead men have I known
In courtesy like to thee:
Two dead men have I loved
With a love that ever will be:
Three dead men have I loved and
thou art last of the three.

THE FLOWER.

ONCE in a golden hour
I cast to earth a seed.
Up there came a flower,
The people said, a weed.

To and fro they went
Thro' my garden-bower,
And muttering discontent
Cursed me and my flower.

Then it grew so tall
It wore a crown of light,
But thieves from o'er the wall
Stole the seed by night.

Sow'd it far and wide
By every town and tower,
Till all the people cried,
'Splendid is the flower.'

Read my little fable:
He that runs may read.
Most can raise the flowers now,
For all have got the seed.

And some are pretty enough,
And some are poor indeed;
And now again the people
Call it but a weed.

REQUIESCAT.

FAIR is her cottage in its place,
Where yon broad water sweetly
slowly glides.
It sees itself from thatch to base
Dream in the sliding tides.

And fairer she, but ah how soon to die!
Her quiet dream of life this hour
may cease.
Her peaceful being slowly passes by
To some more perfect peace.

THE SAILOR BOY.

HE rose at dawn and, fired with hope,
Shot o'er the seething harbor-bar,
And reach'd the ship and caught the
rope,
And whistled to the morning star.

And while he whistled long and loud
He heard a fierce mermaid cry,
'O boy, tho' thou art young and
proud,
I see the place where thou wilt lie.

'The sands and yeasty surges mix
In caves about the dreary bay,
And on thy ribs the limpet sticks,
And in thy heart the scrawl shall
play.'

'Fool,' he answer'd, 'death is sure
To those that stay and those that
roam,
But I will nevermore endure
To sit with empty hands at home.

'My mother clings about my neck,
My sisters crying, "Stay for shame;"
My father raves of death and wreck,
They are all to blame, they are all
to blame.

'God help me! save I take my part
Of danger on the roaring sea,
A devil rises in my heart,
Far worse than any death to me.'

THE ISLET.

'WHITHER, O whither, love, shall
we go,
For a score of sweet little summers
or so?'
The sweet little wife of the singer
said,

On the day that follow'd the day she
was wed,
' Whither, O whither, love, shall we
go ?'

And the singer shaking his curly head
Turn'd as he sat, and struck the keys
There at his right with a sudden
crash,

Singing, 'And shall it be over the seas
With a crew that is neither rude nor
rash,

But a bevy of Eroses apple-cheek'd,
In a shallop of crystal ivory-beak'd,
With a satin sail of a ruby glow,
To a sweet little Eden on earth that
I know,

A mountain islet pointed and peak'd;
Waves on a diamond shingle dash,
Cataract brooks to the ocean run,
Fairly-delicate palaces shine
Mixt with myrtle and clad with vine,
And over stream'd and silvery-
streak'd

With many a rivulet high against the
Sun

The facets of the glorious mountain
flash

Above the valleys of palm and pine.'

' Thither, O thither, love, let us go.'

' No, no, no !
For in all that exquisite isle, my
dear,

There is but one bird with a musi-
cal throat,
And his compass is but of a single
note,

That it makes one weary to hear.'

' Mock me not ! mock me not ! love,
let us go.'

' No, love, no.
For the bud ever breaks into bloom
on the tree,

And a storm never wakes on the
lonely sea,

And a worm is there in the lonely
wood,

That pierces the liver and blackens
the blood;

And makes it a sorrow to be.'

CHILD-SONGS.

I.

THE CITY CHILD.

DAINTY little maiden, whither would
you wander ?

Whither from this pretty home, the
home where mother dwells ?

' Far and far away,' said the dainty
little maiden,

' All among the gardens, auriculas,
anemones,

Roses and lilies and Canterbury-
bells.'

Dainty little maiden, whither would
you wander ?

Whither from this pretty house, this
city-house of ours ?

' Far and far away,' said the dainty
little maiden,

' All among the meadows, the clover
and the clematis,

Daisies and kingcups and honey-
suckle-flowers.'

II.

MINNIE AND WINNIE.

MINNIE and Winnie

Slept in a shell.

Sleep, little ladies !

And they slept well.

Pink was the shell within,

Silver without;

Sounds of the great sea

Wander'd about.

Sleep, little ladies !

Wake not soon !

Echo on echo

Dies to the moon.

Two bright stars

Peep'd into the shell.

' What are they dreaming of ?

Who can tell ?'

Started a green linnet
Out of the croft;
Wake, little ladies,
The sun is aloft!

THE SPITEFUL LETTER.

HERE, it is here, the close of the year,
And with it a spiteful letter.
My name in song has done him much
wrong,
For himself has done much better.

O little bard, is your lot so hard,
If men neglect your pages?
I think not much of yours or of mine,
I hear the roll of the ages.

Rhymes and rhymes in the range of
the times!
Are mine for the moment stronger?
Yet hate me not, but abide your lot,
I last but a moment longer.

This faded leaf, our names are as brief;
What room is left for a hater?
Yet the yellow leaf hates the greener
leaf,
For it hangs one moment later.

Greater than I—is that your cry?
And men will live to see it.
Well—if it be so—so it is, you know;
And if it be so, so be it.

Brief, brief is a summer leaf,
But this is the time of hollies.
O hollies and ivies and evergreens,
How I hate the spites and the
follies!

LITERARY SQUABBLES.

AH God! the petty fools of rhyme
That shriek and sweat in pigmy wars
Before the stony face of Time,
And look'd at by the silent stars:

Who hate each other for a song,
And do their little best to bite

And pinch their brethren in the throg,
And scratch the very dead for spite:

And strain to make an inch of room
For their sweet selves, and cannot
hear
The sullen Lethe rolling doom
On them and theirs and all things
here:

When one small touch of Charity
Could lift them nearer God-like state
Than if the crowded Orb should cry
Like those who cried Diana great:

And I too, talk, and lose the touch
I talk of. Surely, after all,
The noblest answer unto such
Is perfect stillness when they brawl.

THE VICTIM.

I.

A PLAGUE upon the people fell,
A famine after laid them low,
Then thorpe and byre arose in fire,
For on them brake the sudden foe;
So thick they died the people cried,
'The Gods are moved against the
land.'

The Priest in horror about his altar
To Thor and Odin lifted a hand:
'Help us from famine
And plague and strife!
What would you have of us?
Human life?
Were it our nearest,
Were it our dearest,
(Answer, O answer)
We give you his life.'

II.

But still the foeman spoil'd and burn'd,
And cattle died, and deer in wood,
And bird in air, and fishes turn'd
And whiten'd all the rolling flood;
And dead men lay all over the way,
Or down in a furrow scathed with
flame:
And ever and aye the Priesthood
moan'd,

Till at last it seem'd that an answer came.

'The King is happy
In child and wife;
Take you his dearest,
Give us a life.'

III.

The Priest went out by heath and hill;
The King was hunting in the wild;
They found the mother sitting still;
She cast her arms about the child.
The child was only eight summers old,
His beauty still with his years in-
creased,

His face was ruddy, his hair was gold,
He seem'd a victim due to the priest.
The Priest beheld him,
And cried with joy,
'The Gods have answer'd:
We give them the boy.'

IV.

The King return'd from out the wild,
He bore but little game in hand;
The mother said, 'They have taken
the child

To spill his blood and heal the land:
The land is sick, the people diseased,
And blight and famine on all the lea:
The holy Gods, they must be appeased,
So I pray you tell the truth to me.

They have taken our son,
They will have his life.
Is *he* your dearest?
Or I, the wife?'

V.

The King bent low, with hand on brow;
He stay'd his arms upon his knee:
'O wife, what use to answer now?
For now the Priest has judged for
me.'

The King was shaken with holy fear;
'The Gods,' he said, 'would have
chosen well;
Yet both are near, and both are dear
And which the dearest I cannot tell!
But the Priest was happy,
His victim won:
'We have his dearest,
His only son!'

VI.

The rites prepared, the victim bared,
The knife uprising toward the blow
To the altar-stone she sprang alone,
'Me, not my darling, no!'
He caught her away with a sudden
cry;

Suddenly from him brake his wife,
And shrieking 'I am his dearest, I—
I am his dearest!' rush'd on the
knife.

And the Priest was happy,
'O, Father Odin,
We give you a life.
Which was his nearest?
Who was his dearest?
The Gods have answer'd
We give them the wife!'

WAGES.

GLORY of warrior, glory of orator, glory of song,
Paid with a voice flying by to be lost on an endless sea—
Glory of Virtue, to fight, to struggle, to right the wrong—
Nay, but she aim'd not at glory, no lover of glory she:
Give her the glory of going on, and still to be.

The wages of sin is death: if the wages of Virtue be dust,
Would she have heart to endure for the life of the worm and the fly?
She desires no isles of the blest, no quiet seats of the just,
To rest in a golden grove, or to bask in a summer sky:
Give her the wages of going on, and not to die.

THE HIGHER PANTHEISM.

THE sun, the moon, the stars, the seas, the hills and the plains—
Are not these, O Soul, the Vision of Him who reigns?

Is not the Vision He? tho' He be not that which He seems?
Dreams are true while they last, and do we not live in dreams?

Earth, these solid stars, this weight of body and limb,
Are they not sign and symbol of thy division from Him?

Dark is the world to thee: thyself art the reason why;
For is He not all but that which has power to feel 'I am I'?

Glory about thee, without thee; and thou fulfillest thy doom
Making Him broken gleams, and a stifled splendor and gloom.

Speak to Him thou for He hears, and Spirit with Spirit can meet—
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet.

God is law, say the wise; O Soul, and let us rejoice,
For if He thunder by law the thunder is yet His voice.

Law is God, say some: no God at all, says the fool;
For all we have power to see is a straight staff bent in a pool;

And the ear of man cannot hear, and the eye of man cannot see;
But if we could see and hear, this Vision—were it not He?

THE VOICE AND THE PEAK.

I.

THE voice and the Peak
Far over summit and lawn,
The lone glow and long roar
Green-rushing from the rosy thrones
of dawn!

II.

All night have I heard the voice
Rave over the rocky bar,
But thou wert silent in heaven,
Above thee glided the star.

III.

Hast thou no voice, O Peak,
That standest high above all?
'I am the voice of the Peak,
I roar and rave for I fall.

IV.

'A thousand voices go
To North, South, East, and West;
They leave the heights and are troub-
led,
And moan and sink to their rest.

V.

'The fields are fair beside them,
The chestnut towers in his bloom;
But they—they feel the desire of the
deep—
Fall, and follow their doom.

VI.

'The deep has power on the height,
And the height has power on the
deep;
They are raised for ever and ever,
And sink again into sleep.'

VII.

Not raised for ever and ever,
But when their cycle is o'er,
The valley, the voice, the peak, the
star
Pass, and are found no more.

VIII.

The Peak is high and flush'd
At his highest with sunrise fire;
The Peak is high, and the stars are
high,
And the thought of a man is higher.

IX.

A deep below the deep,
And a height beyond the height!
Our hearing is not hearing,
And our seeing is not sight.

X.

The voice and the Peak
Far into heaven withdrawn,
The lone glow and long roar
Green-rushing from the rosy thrones
of dawn!

FLOWER in the crannied wall,
I pluck you out of the crannies,
I hold you here, root and all, in my
hand,

Little flower—but if I could under-
stand
What you are, root and all, and all in
all,
I should know what God and man is.

A DEDICATION.

DEAR, near and true—no truer Time
himself
Can prove you, tho' he make you
evermore
Dearer and nearer, as the rapid of life
Shoots to the fall—take this and pray
that he
Who wrote it, honoring your sweet
faith in him,
May trust himself; and after praise
and scorn,
As one who feels the immeasurable
world,
Attain the wise indifference of the
wise;
And after Autumn past—if left to pass
His autumn into seeming-leafless
days—
Draw toward the long frost and long-
est night,
Wearing his wisdom lightly, like the
fruit
Which in our winter woodland looks
a flower.¹

¹ The fruit of the Spindle-tree (*Euonymus Europæus*).

EXPERIMENTS.

BOËDICEA.

WHILE about the shore of Mona those Neronian legionaries
Burnt and broke the grove and altar of the Druid and Druidess,
Far in the East Boëdicæa, standing loftily charioted,
Mad and maddening all that heard her in her fierce volubility,
Girt by half the tribes of Britain, near the colony Câmulo-dûne,
Yell'd and shriek'd between her daughters o'er a wild confederacy.

'They that scorn the tribes and call us Britain's barbarous populaces,
Did they hear me, would they listen, did they pity me supplicating?
Shall I heed them in their anguish? shall I brook to be supplicated?
Hear Icenian, Catieuchlanian, hear Coritanian, Trinobant!

Must their ever-ravaging eagle's beak and talon annihilate us?
Tear the noble heart of Britain, leave it gorily quivering?
Bark an answer, Britain's raven! bark and blacken innumerable,
Blacken round the Roman carrion, make the carcase a skeleton,
Kite and kestrel, wolf and wolfkin, from the wilderness, wallow in it,
Till the face of Bel be brighten'd, Taranis be propitiated.
Lo their colony half-defended! lo their colony, Cámulodúne!
There the horde of Roman robbers mock at a barbarous adversary.
There the hive of Roman liars worship an emperor-idiot.
Such is Rome, and this her deity: hear it, Spirit of Cássivëlaún!

'Hear it, Gods! the Gods have heard it, O Icenian, O Coritanian!
Doubt not ye the Gods have answer'd, Catiuechlanian, Trinobant.
These have told us all their anger in miraculous utterances,
Thunder, a flying fire in heaven, a murmur heard aërially,
Phantom sound of blows descending, moan of an enemy massacred,
Phantom wail of women and children, multitudinous agonies.
Bloodily flow'd the Tamesa rolling phantom bodies of horses and men;
Then a phantom colony smoulder'd on the reflux estuary;
Lastly yonder yester-even, suddenly giddily tottering—
There was one who watch'd and told me—down their statue of Victory fell.
Lo their precious Rman bantling, lo the colony Cámulodúne,
Shall we teach it a Roman lesson? shall we care to be pitiful?
Shall we deal with it as an infant? shall we dandle it amorously?

'Hear Icenian, Catiuechlanian, hear Coritanian, Trinobant!
While I roved about the forest, long and bitterly meditating,
There I heard them in the darkness, at the mystical ceremony,
Loosely robed in flying raiment, sang the terrible prophetesses,
"Fear not, isle of blowing woodland, isle of silvery parapets!
Tho' the Roman eagle shadow thee, tho' the gathering enemy narrow thee,
Thou shalt wax and he shall dwindle, thou shalt be the mighty one yet!
Thine the liberty, thine the glory, thine the deeds to be celebrated,
Thine the myriad-rolling ocean, light and shadow illimitable,
Thine the lands of lasting summer, many-blossoming Paradises,
Thine the North and thine the South and thine the battle-thunder of God,"
So they chanted: how shall Britain light upon auguries happier?
So they chanted in the darkness, and there cometh a victory now.

'Hear Icenian, Catiuechlanian, hear Coritanian, Trinobant!
Me the wife of rich Prasútagus, me the lover of liberty,
Me they seized and me they tortured, me they lash'd and humiliated,
Me the sport of ribald Veterans, mine of ruffian violators!
See they sit, they hide their faces, miserable in ignominy!
Wherefore in me burns an anger, not by blood to be satiated.
Lo the palaces and the temple, lo the colony Cámulodúne!
There they ruled, and thence they wasted all the flourishing territory,
Thither at their will they haled the yellow-ringleted Britoness—
Bloodily, bloodily fall the battle-axe, unexhausted, inexorable.
Shout Icenian, Catiuechlanian, shout Coritanian, Trinobant,
Till the victim hear within and yearn to hurry precipitously
Like the leaf in a roaring whirlwind, like the smoke in a hurricane whirl'd.
Lo the colony, there they rioted in the city of Cúnobelinc!

There they drank in cups of emerald, there at tables of ebony lay,
 Rolling on their purple couches in their tender effeminacy.
 There they dwelt and there they rioted; there—there—they dwell no more.
 Burst the gates, and burn the palaces, break the works of the statuary,
 Take the hoary Roman head and shatter it, hold it abominable,
 Cut the Roman boy to pieces in his lust and voluptuousness,
 Lash the maiden into swooning, me they lash'd and humiliated,
 Chop the breasts from off the mother, dash the brains of the little one out,
 Up my Britons, on my chariot, on my chargers, trample them under us.'

So the Queen Boādicæa, standing loftily charioted,
 Brandishing in her hand a dart and rolling glances lioness-like,
 Yell'd and shriek'd between her daughters in her fierce volubility.
 Till her people all around the royal chariot agitated,
 Madly dash'd the darts together, writhing barbarous lineaments,
 Made the noise of frosty woodlands, when they shiver in January,
 Roar'd as when the roaring breakers boom and blanch on the precipices,
 Yell'd as when the winds of winter tear an oak on a promontory.
 So the silent colony hearing her tumultuous adversaries
 Clash the darts and on the buckler beat with rapid unanimous hand,
 Thought on all her evil tyrannies, all her pitiless avarice,
 Till she felt the heart within her fall and flutter tremulously,
 Then her pulses at the clamoring of her enemy fainted away.
 Out of evil evil flourishes, out of tyranny tyranny buds.
 Ran the land with Roman slaughter, multitudinous agonies.
 Perish'd many a maid and matron, many a valorous legionary,
 Fell the colony, city, and citadel, London, Verulam, Cāmulođūne.

IN QUANTITY.

ON TRANSLATIONS OF HOMER.

Hexameters and Pentameters.

THESE lame hexameters the strong-wing'd music of Homer!
 No—but a most burlesque barbarous experiment.
 When was a harsher sound ever heard, ye Muses, in England?
 When did a frog coarser croak upon our Helicon?
 Hexameters no worse than daring Germany gave us,
 Barbarous experiment, barbarous hexameters.

MILTON.

Alcaics.

O MIGHTY-MOUTH'D inventor of harmonies,
 O skill'd to sing of Time or Eternity,
 God-gifted organ-voice of England,
 Milton, a name to resound for ages;

Whose Titan angels, Gabriel, Abdiel,
 Starr'd from Jehovah's gorgeous armories,
 Tower, as the deep-domed empyræan
 Rings to the roar of an angel onset—
 Me rather all that bowery loneliness,
 The brooks of Eden mazily murmuring,

And bloom profuse and cedar arches
 Charm, as a wanderer out in ocean,
 Where some refulgent sunset of India
 Streams o'er a rich ambrosial ocean
 isle,
 And crimson-hued the stately palm-
 woods
 Whisper in odorous heights of
 even.

Heptasyllabics.

O you chorus of indolent reviewers,
 Irresponsible, indolent reviewers,
 Look, I come to the test, a tiny poem
 All composed in a metre of Catullus,
 All in quantity, careful of my motion,
 Like the skater on ice that hardly
 bears him,
 Lest I fall unawares before the people,
 Waking laughter in indolent reviewers.
 Should I flounder awhile without a tumble
 Thro' this metrification of Catullus,
 They should speak to me not without a welcome,
 All that chorus of indolent reviewers.
 Hard, hard, hard is it, only not to
 tumble,
 So fantastical is the dainty metre.
 Wherefore slight me not wholly, nor
 believe me
 Too presumptuous, indolent reviewers.
 O blatant Magazines, regard me
 rather—
 Since I blush to belaud myself a moment—
 As some rare little rose, a piece of in-
 most
 Horticultural art, or half coquette-
 like
 Maiden, not to be greeted unbenign-
 ly.

SPECIMEN OF A TRANSLATION OF THE ILIAD IN BLANK VERSE.

So Hector spake; the Trojans roar'd
 applause;
 Then loosed their sweating horses
 from the yoke,
 And each beside his chariot bound his
 own;
 And oxen from the city, and goodly
 sheep
 In haste they drove, and honey-hearted
 wine
 And bread from out the houses
 brought, and heap'd
 Their firewood, and the winds from off
 the plain
 Roll'd the rich vapor far into the
 heaven.
 And these all night upon the bridge¹
 of war
 Sat glorying; many a fire before them
 blazed:
 As when in heaven the stars about the
 moon
 Look beautiful, when all the winds are
 laid,
 And every height comes out, and jut-
 ting peak
 And valley, and the immeasurable
 heavens
 Break open to their highest, and all
 the stars
 Shine, and the Shepherd gladdens in
 his heart:
 So many a fire between the ships and
 stream
 Of Xanthus blazed before the towers
 of Troy,
 A thousand on the plain; and close by
 each
 Sat fifty in the blaze of burning fire;
 And eating hoary grain and pulse the
 steeds
 Fixt by their cars, waited the golden
 dawn. *Iliad* VIII. 542-561.

¹ Or, ridge.

THE WINDOW;

OR, THE SONG OF THE WRENS.

FOUR years ago Mr. Sullivan requested me to write a little song-cycle, German fashion, for him to exercise his art upon. He had been very successful in setting such old songs as 'Orpheus with his lute,' and I dressed up for him, partly in the old style, a puppet, whose almost only merit is, perhaps, that it can dance to Mr. Sullivan's instrument. I am sorry that my four-year-old puppet should have to dance at all in the dark shadow of these days; but the music is now completed, and I am bound by my promise.

December, 1870.

A. TENNYSON.

THE WINDOW.

ON THE HILL.

THE lights and shadows fly!
Yonder it brightens and darkens down
on the plain.

A jewel, a jewel dear to a lover's
eye!

Oh is it the brook, or a pool, or her
window pane,
When the winds are up in the
morning?

Clouds that are racing above,
And winds and lights and shadows
that cannot be still,
All running on one way to the home
of my love,

You are all running on, and I stand
on the slope of the hill,
And the winds are up in the
morning!

Follow, follow the chase!
And my thoughts are as quick and as
quick, ever on, on, on.

O lights, are you flying over her
sweet little face?

And my heart is there before you are
come, and gone,
When the winds are up in the
morning!

Follow them down the slope!
And I follow them down to the win-
dow-pane of my dear,
And it brightens and darkens and
brightens like my hope,

And it darkens and brightens and
darkens like my fear,
And the winds are up in the
morning.

AT THE WINDOW.

Vine, vine and eglantine,
Clasp her window, trail and twine!
Rose, rose and clematis,
Trail and twine and clasp and kiss,
Kiss, kiss; and make her a bower
All of flowers, and drop me a
flower,
Drop me a flower.

Vine, vine and eglantine,
Cannot a flower, a flower be mine?
Rose, rose and clematis,
Drop me a flower, a flower, to kiss,
Kiss, kiss—and out of her bower
All of flowers, a flower, a flower,
Drop, a flower.

GONE.

Gone!
Gone, till the end of the year,
Gone, and the light gone with her,
and left me in shadow here!

Gone—flitted away,
Taken the stars from the night and
the sun from the day!
Gone, and a cloud in my heart, and a
storm in the air!

Flown to the east or the west, flitted
I know not where!

Down in the south is a flash and a
groan: she is there! she is
there!

WINTER.

The frost is here,
And fuel is dear,
And woods are sear,
And fires burn clear,
And frost is here
And has bitten the heel of the going
year.

Bite, frost, bite!
You roll up away from the light
The blue wood-louse, and the plump
dormouse,
And the bees are still'd, and the flies
are kill'd,
And you bite far into the heart of the
house,
But not into mine.

Bite, frost, bite!
The woods are all the searer,
The fuel is all the dearer,
The fires are all the clearer,
My spring is all the nearer,
You have bitten into the heart of the
earth,
But not into mine.

SPRING.

Birds' love and birds' song
Flying here and there,
Birds' song and birds' love,
And you with gold for hair!
Birds' song and birds' love,
Passing with the weather,
Men's song and men's love,
To love once and for ever.

Men's love and bird's love,
And women's love and men's!
And you my wren with a crown of
gold,
You my queen of the wrens!
You the queen of the wrens—
We'll be birds of a feather,
I'll be King of the Queen of the
wrens,
And all in a nest together.

THE LETTER.

Where is another sweet as my sweet,
Fine of the fine, and shy of the shy?
Fine little hands, fine little feet—
Dewy blue eye.
Shall I write to her? shall I go?
Ask her to marry me by and by?
Somebody said that she'd say no;
Somebody knows that she'll say ay!

Ay or no, if ask'd to her face?
Ay or no, from shy of the shy?
Go, little letter, apace, apace,
Fly;
Fly to the light in the valley below—
Tell my wish to her dewy blue eye:
Somebody said that she'd say no;
Somebody knows that she'll say ay!

NO ANSWER.

The mist and the rain, the mist and
the rain!
Is it ay or no? is it ay or no?
And never a glimpse of her window
pane!
And I may die but the grass will
grow,
And the grass will grow when I am
gone,
And the wet west wind and the world
will go on.
Ay is the song of the wedded spheres,
No is trouble and cloud and storm,
Ay is life for a hundred years,
No will push me down to the
worm,
And when I am there and dead and
gone,
The wet west wind and the world
will go on.

The wind and the wet, the wind and
the wet!
Wet west wind how you blow, you
blow!
And never a line from my lady yet!
Is it ay or no? is it ay or no?
Blow then, blow, and when I am gone,
The wet west wind and the world
may go on.

NO ANSWER.

Winds are loud and you are dumb,
 Take my love, for love will come,
 Love will come but once a life.
 Winds are loud and winds will pass !
 Spring is here with leaf and grass :
 Take my love and be my wife.
 After-loves of maids and men
 Are but dainties drest again :
 Love me now, you'll love me then :
 Love can love but once a life.

THE ANSWER.

Two little hands that meet,
 Claspt on her seal, my sweet !
 Must I take you and break you,
 Two little hands that meet ?
 I must take you, and break you,
 And loving hands must part—
 Take, take—break, break—
 Break—you may break my heart.
 Faint heart never won—
 Break, break, and all's done.

AY.

Be merry, all birds, to-day,
 Be merry on earth as you never
 were merry before,
 Be merry in heaven, O larks, and far
 away,
 And merry for ever and ever, and
 one day more.

Why ?

For it's easy to find a rhyme.
 Look, look, how he flits,
 The fire-crown'd king of the wrens,
 from out of the pine !
 Look how they tumble the blossom,
 the mad little tits !

'Cuck-oo ! Cuck-oo !' was ever a
 May so fine ?

Why ?

For it's easy to find a rhyme.
 O merry the linnet and dove,
 And swallow and sparrow and
 thristle, and have your desire !
 O merry my heart, you have gotten
 the wings of love,
 And flit like the king of the wrens
 with a crown of fire.

Why ?

For it's ay ay, ay ay.

WHEN.

Sun comes, moon comes,
 Time slips away.
 Sun sets, moon sets,
 Love, fix a day.

'A year hence, a year hence.'
 'We shall both be gray.'
 'A month hence, a month hence.'
 'Far, far away.'

'A week hence, a week hence.'
 'Ah, the long delay.'
 'Wait a little, wait a little,
 You shall fix a day.'

'To-morrow, love, to-morrow,
 And that's an age away.'
 Blaze upon her window, sun,
 And honor all the day.

MARRIAGE MORNING.

Light, so low upon earth,
 You send a flash to the sun.
 Here is the golden close of love,
 All my wooing is done.
 Oh, the woods and the meadows,
 Woods where we hid from the wet,
 Stiles where we stay'd to be kind,
 Meadows in which we met !
 Light, so low in the vale
 You flash and lighten afar,
 For this is the golden morning of
 love,
 And you are his morning star.
 Flash, I am coming, I come,
 By meadow and stile and wood,
 Oh, lighten into my eyes and my
 heart,
 Into my heart and my blood !

Heart, are you great enough
 For a love that never tires ?
 O heart, are you great enough for
 love ?

I have heard of thorns and briars.
 Over the thorns and briars,
 Over the meadows and stiles,
 Over the world to the end of it
 Flash for a million miles.

IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.

OBITU MDCCCXXXIII.

STRONG Son of God, immortal Love,
Whom we, that have not seen
thy face,
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove ;

Thine are these orbs of light and
shade ;
Thou madest Life in man and
brute ;
Thou madest Death ; and lo, thy
foot
Is on the skull which thou hast made.

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust :
Thou madest man, he knows not
why,
He thinks he was not made to die ;
And thou hast made him : thou art
just.

Thou seemest human and divine,
The highest, holiest manhood,
thou :
Our wills are ours, we know not
how ;
Our wills are ours, to make them
thine.

Our little systems have their day ;
They have their day and cease to
be :
They are but broken lights of
thee,
And thou, O Lord, art more than they.

We have but faith : we cannot know ;
For knowledge is of things we
see ;
And yet we trust it comes from
thee,
A beam in darkness : let it grow.

Let knowledge grow from more to
more,
But more of reverence in us dwell ;
That mind and soul, according
well,
May make one music as before,

But vaster. We are fools and slight ;
We mock thee when we do not
fear :
But help thy foolish ones to bear ;
Help thy vain worlds to bear thy light.

Forgive what seem'd my sin in me ;
What seem'd my worth since I
began ;
For merit lives from man to
man,
And not from man, O Lord, to thee.

Forgive my grief for one removed,
Thy creature, whom I found so
fair.
I trust he lives in thee, and there
I find him worthier to be loved.

Forgive these wild and wandering
cries,
Confusions of a wasted youth ;
Forgive them where they fail in
truth,
And in thy wisdom make me wise.

1849.

I.

I HELD it truth, with him who sings
To one clear harp in divers tones,
That men may rise on stepping-
stones
Of their dead selves to higher things.

But who shall so forecast the years
And find in loss a gain to match ?
Or reach a hand thro' time to
catch
The far-off interest of tears ?

Let Love clasp Grief lest both be
drown'd,
Let darkness keep her raven
gloss :
Ah, sweeter to be drunk with
loss,
To dance with death, to beat the
ground,

Than that the victor Hours should
scorn
The long result of love, and boast,
'Behold the man that loved and
lost,
But all he was is overworn.'

II.

Old Yew, which graspest at the stones
That name the under-lying dead,
Thy fibres net the dreamless
head,
Thy roots are wrapt about the bones.

The seasons bring the flower again,
And bring the firstling to the
flock;
And in the dusk of thee, the clock
Beats out the little lives of men.

O not for thee the glow, the bloom,
Who changest not in any gale,
Nor branding summer suns avail
To touch thy thousand years of gloom:

And gazing on thee, sullen tree,
Sick for thy stubborn hardihood,
I seem to fail from out my blood
And grow incorporate into thee.

III.

O Sorrow, cruel fellowship,
O Priestess in the vaults of
Death,
O sweet and bitter in a breath,
What whispers from thy lying lip?

'The stars,' she whispers, blindly
run;
A web is wov'n across the sky;
From out waste places comes a
cry,
And murmurs from the dying sun:

'And all the phantom, Nature,
stands—
With all the music in her tone,
A hollow echo of my own,—
A hollow form with empty hands.'

And shall I take a thing so blind,
Embrace her as my natural good;

Or crush her, like a vice of blood,
Upon the threshold of the mind?

IV.

To Sleep I give my powers away;
My will is bondsman to the dark;
I sit within a helmless bark,
And with my heart I muse and say:

O heart, how fares it with thee now,
That thou should'st fail from thy
desire,
Who scarcely darest to inquire,
'What is it makes me beat so low?'

Something it is which thou hast lost,
Some pleasure from thine early
years.
Break, thou deep vase of chilling
tears,
That grief hath shaken into frost!

Such clouds of nameless trouble cross
All night below the darken'd
eyes;
With morning wakes the will,
and cries,
'Thou shalt not be the fool of loss.'

V.

I sometimes hold it half a sin
To put in words the grief I feel;
For words, like Nature, half
reveal
And half conceal the Soul within.

But, for the unquiet heart and brain,
A use in measured language lies;
The sad mechanic exercise,
Like dull narcotics, numbing pain.

In words, like weeds, I'll wrap me o'er,
Like coarsest clothes against the
cold:
But that large grief which these
enfold
Is given in outline and no more.

VI.

One writes, that 'Other friends
remain,'

That 'Loss is common to the
race'—
And common is the common-
place,
And vacant chaff well meant for grain.

That loss is common would not make
My own less bitter, rather more :
Too common! Never morning
wore
To evening, but some heart did break.

O father, wheresoe'er thou be,
Who pledgedst now thy gallant
son;
A shot, ere half thy draught be
done,
Hath still'd the life that beat from
thee.

O mother, praying God will save
Thy sailor,—while thy head is
bow'd,
His heavy-shotted hammock-
shroud
Drops in his vast and wandering grave.

Ye know no more than I who wrought
At that last hour to please him
well;
Who mused on all I had to tell,
And something written, something
thought;

Expecting still his advent home;
And ever met him on his way
With wishes, thinking, 'here to-
day,'

Or 'here to-morrow will he come.'

O somewhere, meek, unconscious
dove,
That sittest ranging golden hair;
And glad to find thyself so fair,
Poor child, that waitest for thy love!

For now her father's chimney glows
In expectation of a guest;
And thinking 'this will please
him best,'
She takes a riband or a rose;

For he will see them on to-night;
And with the thought her color
'burns;
And, having left the glass, she
turns
Once more to set a ringlet right;

And, even when she turn'd, the curse
Had fallen, and her future Lord
Was drown'd in passing thro' the
ford,
Or kill'd in falling from his horse.

O what to her shall be the end?
And what to me remains of good?
To her, perpetual maidenhood,
And unto me no second friend.

VII.

Dark house, by which once more I
stand
Here in the long unlovely street,
Doors, where my heart was used
to beat
So quickly, waiting for a hand,

A hand that can be clasp'd no more—
Behold me, for I cannot sleep,
And like a guilty thing I creep
At earliest morning to the door.

He is not here; but far away
The noise of life begins again,
And ghastly thro' the drizzling
rain
On the bald street breaks the blank
day.

VIII.

A happy lover who has come
To look on her that loves him
well,
Who 'lights and rings the gate-
way bell,
And learns her gone and far from
home;

He saddens, all the magic light
Dies off at once from bower and
hall,
And all the place is dark, and all
The chambers emptied of delight:

So find I every pleasant spot
 In which we two were wont to
 meet,
 The field, the chamber and the
 street,
 For all is dark where thou art not.

Yet as that other, wandering there
 In those deserted walks, may find
 A flower beat with rain and wind,
 Which once she foster'd up with care;

So seems it in my deep regret,
 O my forsaken heart, with thee
 And this poor flower of poesy
 Which little cared for fades not yet.

But since it pleased a vanish'd eye,
 I go to plant it on his tomb,
 That if it can it there may bloom,
 Or dying, there at least may die.

IX.

Fair ship, that from the Italian shore
 Sallest the placid ocean-plains
 With my lost Arthur's loved re-
 mains,
 Spread thy full wings, and waft him
 o'er.

So draw him home to those that
 mourn
 In vain; a favorable speed
 Ruffle thy mirror'd mast, and lead
 Thro' prosperous floods his holy urn.

All night no ruder air perplex
 Thy sliding keel, till Phosphor,
 bright

As our pure love, thro' early light
 Shall glimmer on the dewy decks.

Sphere all your lights around, above;
 Sleep, gentle heavens, before the
 prow;
 Sleep, gentle winds, as he sleeps
 now,

My friend, the brother of my love;

My Arthur, whom I shall not see
 Till all my widow'd race be run;
 Dear as the mother to the son,
 More than my brothers are to me.

X.

I hear the noise about thy keel;
 I hear the bell struck in the night:
 I see the cabin-window bright;
 I see the sailor at the wheel.

Thou bring'st the sailor to his wife,
 And travell'd men from foreign
 lands;
 And letters unto trembling hands;
 And, thy dark freight, a vanish'd life.

So bring him: we have idle dreams:
 This look of quiet flatters thus
 Our home-bred fancies: O to us,
 The fools of habit, sweeter seems

To rest beneath the clover sod,
 That takes the sunshine and the
 rains,
 Or where the kneeling hamlet
 drains
 The chalice of the grapes of God;

Than if with thee the roaring wells
 Should gulf him fathom-deep in
 brine;
 And hands so often clasp'd in
 mine,
 Should toss with tangle and with
 shells.

XI.

Calm is the morn without a sound,
 Calm as to suit a calmer grief,
 And only thro' the faded leaf
 The chestnut pattering to the ground:

Calm and deep peace on this high
 wold,
 And on these dews that drench
 the furze,
 And all the silvery gossamers
 That twinkle into green and gold:

Calm and still light on yon great plain
 That sweeps with all its autumn
 bowers,
 And crowded farms and lessening
 towers,
 To mingle with the bounding main:

Calm and deep peace in this wide
air,
These leaves that redden to the
fall;
And in my heart, if calm at all,
If any calm, a calm despair:

Calm on the seas, and silver sleep,
And waves that sway themselves
in rest,
And dead calm in that noble
breast
Which heaves but with the heaving
deep.

XII.

Lo, as a dove when up she springs
To bear thro' Heaven a tale of
woe,
Some dolorous message knit be-
low
The wild pulsation of her wings;

Like her I go; I cannot stay;
I leave this mortal ark behind,
A weight of nerves without a
mind,
And leave the cliffs, and haste away

O'er ocean-mirrors rounded large,
And reach the glow of southern
skies,
And see the sails at distance rise,
And linger weeping on the marge,

And saying: 'Comes he thus, my
friend?
Is this the end of all my care?'
And circle moaning in the air:
'Is this the end? Is this the end?'

And forward dart again, and play
About the prow, and back return
To where the body sits, and learn
That I have been an hour away.

XIII.

Tears of the widower, when he sees
A late-lost form that sleep reveals,
And moves his doubtful arms,
and feels
Her place is empty, fall like these;

Which weep a loss forever new,
A void where heart on heart re-
posed;
And, where warm hands have
prest and closed,
Silence, till I be silent too.

Which weep the comrade of my
choice,
An awful thought, a life removed,
The human-hearted man I loved,
A Spirit, not a breathing voice.

Come Time, and teach me, many
years,
I do not suffer in a dream;
For now so strange do these
things seem,
Mine eyes have leisure for their tears;

My fancies time to rise on wing,
And glance about the approach-
ing sails,
As tho' they brought but mer-
chants' bales,
And not the burthen that they bring.

XIV.

If one should bring me this report,
That thou hadst touch'd the land
to-day,
And I went down unto the quay,
And found thee lying in the port;

And standing, muffled round with woe,
Should see thy passengers in rank
Come stepping lightly down the
plank,
And beckoning unto those they know;

And if along with these should come
The man I held as half-divine;
Should strike a sudden hand in
mine,
And ask a thousand things of home;

And I should tell him all my pain,
And how my life had droop'd of
late,
And he should sorrow o'er my
state
And marvel what possess'd my brain;

And I perceived no touch of change,
No hint of death in all his frame,
But found him all in all the same,
I should not feel it to be strange.

xv.

To-night the winds begin to rise
And roar from yonder dropping
day:

The last red leaf is whirl'd away,
The rooks are blown about the skies;

The forest crack'd, the waters curl'd,
The cattle huddled on the lea;
And wildly dash'd on tower and
tree

The sunbeam strikes along the world:

And but for fancies, which aver
That all thy motions gently pass
Athwart a plane of molten glass,
I scarce could brook the strain and
stir

That makes the harren branches loud;
And but for fear it is not so,
The wild unrest that lives in woe
Would dote and pore on yonder cloud

That rises upward always higher,
And onward drags a laboring
breast,

And topples round the dreary west,
A looming bastion fringed with fire.

xvi.

What words are these have fall'n
from me?

Can calm despair and wild un-
rest

Be tenants of a single breast,
Or sorrow such a changeling be?

Or doth she only seem to take
The touch of change in calm or
storm;

But knows no more of transient
form
In her deep self, than some dead lake

That holds the shadow of a lark
Hung in the shadow of a heaven?

Or has the shock, so harshly given,
Confused me like the unhappy bark

That strikes by night a craggy shelf,
And staggers blindly ere she sink?
And stunn'd me from my power
to think

And all my knowledge of myself;

And made me that delirious man
Whose fancy fuses old and new,
And flashes into false and true,
And mingles all without a plan?

xvii.

Thou comest, much wept for: such a
breeze
Compell'd thy canvas, and my
prayer
Was as the whisper of an air
To breathe thee over lonely seas.

For I in spirit saw thee move
Thro' circles of the bounding sky,
Week after week: the days go
by:
Come quick, thou bringest all I love.

Henceforth, wherever thou may'st
roam,
My blessing, like a line of light,
Is on the waters day and night,
And like a beacon guards thee home.

So may whatever tempest mars
Mid-ocean, spare thee, sacred
bark;
And balmy drops in summer dark
Slide from the bosom of the stars.

So kind an office hath been done,
Such precious relics brought by
thee;
The dust of him I shall not see
Till all my widow'd race be run.

xviii.

'Tis well; 'tis something; we may
stand
Where he in English earth is laid,
And from his ashes may be made
The violet of his native land.

'Tis little ; but it looks in truth
As if the quiet bones were blest
Among familiar names to rest
And in the places of his youth.

Come then, pure hands, and bear the
head
That sleeps or wears the mask
of sleep,
And come, whatever loves to
weep,
And hear the ritual of the dead.

Ah yet, ev'n yet, if this might be,
I, falling on his faithful heart,
Would breathing thro' his lips
impart
The life that almost dies in me ;

That dies not, but endures with pain,
And slowly forms the firmer
mind,
Treasuring the look it cannot
find,
The words that are not heard again.

XIX.

The Danube to the Severn gave
The darken'd heart that beat no
more ;
They laid him by the pleasant
shore,
And in the hearing of the wave.

There twice a day the Severn fills ;
The salt sea-water passes by,
And hushes half the babbling
Wye,
And makes a silence in the hills.

The Wye is hush'd nor moved along,
And hush'd my deepest grief of
all,
When fill'd with tears that can-
not fall,
I brim with sorrow drowning song

The tide flows down, the wave again
Is vocal in its wooded walls ;
My deeper anguish also falls,
And I can speak a little then.

XX.

The lesser griefs that may be said,
That breathe a thousand tender
vows,
Are but as servants in a house
Where lies the master newly dead ;

Who speak their feeling as it is,
And weep the 'faintness from the
mind :
'It will be hard,' they say, 'to find
Another service such as this.'

My lighter moods are like to these,
That out of words a comfort win ;
But there are other griefs within,
And tears that at their fountain
freeze ;

For by the hearth the children sit
Cold in that atmosphere of Death,
And scarce endure to draw the
breath,
Or like to noiseless phantoms flit :

But open converse is there none,
So much the vital spirits sink
To see the vacant chair, and
think,
'How good! how kind! and he is
gone.'

XXI.

I sing to him that rests below,
And, since the grasses round me
wave,
I take the grasses of the grave,
And make them pipes whereon to
blow.

The traveller hears me now and then,
And sometimes harshly will he
speak :
'This fellow would make weak-
ness weak,
And melt the waxen hearts of men.'

Another answers, 'Let him be,
He loves to make parade of pain,
That with his piping he may
gain
The praise that comes to constancy.'

A third is wroth: 'Is this an hour
For private sorrow's barren song,
When more and more the people
throng
The chairs and thrones of civil
power?

'A time to sicken and to swoon,
When Science reaches forth her
arms
To feel from world to world, and
charms
Her secret from the latest moon?'

Behold, ye speak an idle thing:
Ye never knew the sacred dust:
I do but sing because I must,
And pipe but as the linnets sing:

And one is glad; her note is gay,
For now her little ones have
ranged;
And one is sad; her note is
changed,
Because her brood is stol'n away.

XXII.

The path by which we twain did go,
Which led by tracts that pleased
us well,
Thro' four sweet years arose and
fell,
From flower to flower, from snow to
snow:

And we with singing cheer'd the way,
And, crown'd with all the season
lent,
From April on to April went,
And glad at heart from May to May:

But where the path we walk'd began
To slant the fifth autumnal slope,
As we descended following Hope,
There sat the Shadow fear'd of man;

Who broke our fair companionship,
And spread his mantle dark and
cold,
And wrapt thee formless in the
fold,
And dull'd the murmur on thy lip,

And bore thee where I could not see
Nor follow, tho' I walk in haste,
And think, that somewhere in
the waste
The Shadow sits and waits for me.

XXIII.

Now, sometimes in my sorrow shut,
Or breaking into song by fits,
Alone, alone, to where he sits,
The Shadow cloak'd from head to foot,

Who keeps the keys of all the creeds,
I wander, often falling lame,
And looking back to whence I
came,
Or on to where the pathway leads;

And crying, How changed from
where it ran
Thro' lands where not a leaf was
dumb:
But all the lavish hills would hum
The murmur of a happy Pan:

When each by turns was guide to
each,
And Fancy light from Fancy
caught,
And Thought leapt out to wed with
Thought
Ere Thought could wed itself with
Speech;

And all we met was fair and good,
And all was good that Time
could bring,
And all the secret of the Spring
Moved in the chambers of the blood;

And many an old philosophy
On Argive heights divinely sang,
And round us all the thicket rang
To many a flute of Arcady.

XXIV.

And was the day of my delight
As pure and perfect as I say?
The very source and fount of
Day
Is dash'd with wandering isles of
night.

If all was good and fair we met,
This earth had been the Paradise
It never look'd to human eyes
Since our first Sun arose and set.

And is it that the haze of grief
Makes former gladness loom so
great?

The lowness of the present state,
That sets the past in this relief?

Or that the past will always win
A glory from its being far;
And orb into the perfect star
We saw not, when we moved therein?

XXV.

I know that this was Life,—the track
Whereon with equal feet we
fared;
And then, as now, the day pre-
pared
The daily burden for the back.

But this it was that made me move
As light as carrier-birds in air;
I love the weight I had to bear,
Because it needed help of Love:

Nor could I weary, heart or limb,
When mighty Love would cleave
in twain
The lading of a single pain,
And part it, giving half to him.

XXVI.

Still onward winds the dreary way;
I with it; for I long to prove
No lapse of moons can canker
Love,
Whatever fickle tongues may say.

And if that eye which watches guilt
And goodness, and hath power to
see
Within the green the moulder'd
tree,
And towers fall'n as soon as built—

Oh, if indeed that eye foresee
Or see (in Him is no before)
In more of life true life no more
And Love the indifference to be,

Then might I find, ere yet the morn
Breaks hither over Indian seas,
That Shadow waiting with the
keys,
To shroud me from my proper scorn.

XXVII.

I envy not in any moods
The captive void of noble rage,
The linnet born within the cage,
That never knew the summer woods:

I envy not the beast that takes
His license in the field of time,
Unfetter'd by the sense of crime,
To whom a conscience never wakes;

Nor, what may count itself as blest,
The heart that never plighted
troth
But stagnates in the weeds of
sloth;
Nor any want-begotten rest.

I hold it true, whate'er befall;
I feel it, when I sorrow most;
'Tis better to have loved and lost
Than never to have loved at all.

XXVIII.

The time draws near the birth of
Christ:
The moon is hid; the night is
still;
The Christmas bells from hill to hill
Answer each other in the mist.

Four voices of four hamlets round,
From far and near, on mead and
moor,
Swell out and fail, as if a door
Were shut between me and the
sound:

Each voice four changes on the wind,
That now dilate, and now decrease,
Peace and goodwill, goodwill and
peace,
Peace and goodwill, to all mankind.

This year I slept and woke with pain,
I almost wish'd no more to wake,

And that my hold on life would
break
Before I heard those bells again :

But they my troubled spirit rule,
For they controll'd me when a
boy ;

They bring me sorrow touch'd
with joy,
The merry merry bells of Yule.

XXIX.

With such compelling cause to grieve
As daily vexes household peace,
And chains regret to his decease,
How dare we keep our Christmas-eve ;

Which brings no more a welcome
guest
To enrich the threshold of the
night
With shower'd largess of delight
In dance and song and game and
jest ?

Yet go, and while the holly boughs
Entwine the cold baptismal font,
Make one wreath more for Use
and Wont,
That guard the portals of the house ;

Old sisters of a day gone by,
Gray nurses, loving nothing new ;
Why should they miss their
yearly due
Before their time ? They too will
die.

XXX.

With trembling fingers did we weave
The holly round the Christmas
hearth ;
A rainy cloud possess'd the
earth,
And sadly fell our Christmas-eve.

At our old pastimes in the hall
We gambol'd, making vain
pretence
Of gladness, with an awful sense
Of one mute Shadow watching all.

We paused : the winds were in the
beech :

We heard them sweep the winter
land ;
And in a circle hand-in-hand
Sat silent, looking each at each.

Then echo-like our voices rang ;
We sung, tho' every eye was dim,
A merry song we sang with him
Last year : impetuously we sang :

We ceased : a gentler feeling crept
Upon us : surely rest is meet :
'They rest,' we said, 'their sleep
is sweet,'
And silence follow'd, and we wept.

Our voices took a higher range ;
Once more we sang : 'They do
not die
Nor lose their mortal sympathy,
Nor change to us, although they
change ;

'Rapt from the fickle and the frail
With gather'd power, yet the
same,
Pierces the keen seraphic flame
From orb to orb, from veil to veil.'

Rise, happy morn, rise, holy morn,
Draw forth the cheerful day from
night :
O Father, touch the east, and
light
The light that shone when Hope was
born.

XXXI.

When Lazarus left his charnel-cave,
And home to Mary's house
return'd,
Was this demanded—if he
yearn'd
To hear her weeping by his grave ?

'Where wert thou, brother, those
four days ?'
There lives nore cord of reply,
Which telling what it is to die
Had surely added praise to praise.

From every house the neighbors met,
The streets were fill'd with
joyful sound,
A solemn gladness even crown'd
The purple brows of Olivet.

Behold a man raised up by Christ!
The rest remaineth unreveal'd;
He told it not; or something
seal'd
The lips of that Evangelist.

XXXII.

Her eyes are homes of silent prayer,
Nor other thought her mind
admits
But, he was dead, and there he
sits,
And he that brought him back is there.

Then one deep love doth supersede
All other, when her ardent gaze
Roves from the living brother's
face,
And rests upon the Life indeed.

All subtle thought, all curious fears,
Borne down by gladness so com-
plete,
She bows, she bathes the Sa-
viour's feet
With costly spikenard and with tears.

Thrice blest whose lives are faithful
prayers,
Whose loves in higher love
endure;
What souls possess themselves
so pure,
Or is there blessedness like theirs?

XXXIII.

O thou that after toil and storm
Mayst seem to have reach'd a
purer air,
Whose faith has centre every-
where,
Nor cares to fix itself to form,

Leave thou thy sister when she prays,
Her early Heaven, her happy
views;

Nor thou with shadow'd hint
confuse
A life that leads melodious days.

Her faith thro' form is pure as thine,
Her hands are quicker unto good:
Oh, sacred be the flesh and
blood
To which she links a truth divine!

See thou, that countest reason ripe
In holding by the law within,
Thou fail not in a world of sin,
And ev'n for want of such a type.

XXXIV.

My own dim life should teach me this,
That life shall live for evermore,
Else earth is darkness at the
core,
And dust and ashes all that is;

This round of green, this orb of
flame,
Fantastic beauty; such as lurks
In some wild Poet, when he
works
Without a conscience or an aim.

What then were God to such as I?
'Twere hardly worth my while to
choose
Of things all mortal, or to use
A little patience ere I die;

'Twere best at once to sink to peace,
Like birds the charming serpent
draws,
To drop head-foremost in the
jaws
Of vacant darkness and to cease.

XXXV.

Yet if some voice that man could trust
Should murmur from the narrow
house,
'The cheeks drop in; the body
bows;
Man dies: nor is there hope in dust:'

Might I not say? 'Yet even here,
But for one hour, O Love, I strive

To keep so sweet a thing alive :
But I should turn mine ears and hear

The moanings of the homeless sea,
The sound of streams that swift
or slow
Draw down Æonian hills, and sow
The dust of continents to be ;

And Love would answer with a sigh,
'The sound of that forgetful shore
Will change my sweetness more
and more,
Half-dead to know that I shall die.'

O me, what profits it to put
An idle case ? If Death were seen
At first as Death, Love had not
been,
Or been in narrowest working shut,

Mere fellowship of sluggish moods,
Or in his coarsest Satyr-shape
Had bruised the herb and crush'd
the grape,
And bask'd and batten'd in the woods.

XXXVI.

Tho' truths in manhood darkly join,
Deep-seated in our mystic frame,
We yield all blessing to the name
Of Him that made them current coin ;

For Wisdom dealt with mortal powers,
Where truth in closest words
shall fail,
When truth embodied in a tale
Shall enter in at lowly doors.

And so the Word had breath, and
wrought
With human hands the creed of
creeds

In loveliness of perfect deeds,
More strong than all poetic thought ;

Which he may read that binds the
sheaf,
Or builds the house, or digs the
grave,
And those wild eyes that watch
the wave
In roarings round the coral reef.

XXXVII.

Urania speaks with darken'd brow :
'Thou pratest here where thou
art least ;
This faith has many a purer priest,
And many an abler voice than thou.

'Go down beside thy native rill,
On thy Parnassus set thy feet,
And hear thy laurel whisper sweet
About the ledges of the hill.'

And my Melpomene replies,
A touch of shame upon her cheek :
'I am not worthy ev'n to speak
Of thy prevailing mysteries ;

'For I am but an earthly Muse,
And owing but a little art
To lull with song an aching heart,
And render human love his dues ;

'But brooding on the dear one dead,
And all he said of things divine,
(And dear to me as sacred wine
To dying lips is all he said),

'I murmur'd, as I came along,
Of comfort clasp'd in truth re-
veal'd ;
And loiter'd in the master's field,
And darken'd sanctities with song.'

XXXVIII.

With weary steps I loiter on,
'Tho' always under alter'd skies
The purple from the distance dies,
My prospect and horizon gone.

No joy the blowing season gives,
The herald melodies of spring,
But in the songs I love to sing
A doubtful gleam of solace lives.

If any care for what is here
Survive in spirits render'd free,
Then are these songs I sing of thee
Not all ungrateful to thine ear.

XXXIX.

Old warder of these buried bones,
And answering now my random
stroke

With fruitful cloud and living
smoke,
Dark yew, that graspest at the stones
And dippest toward the dreamless
head,
To thee too comes the golden
hour
When flower is feeling after
flower;
But Sorrow—fixt upon the dead,
And darkening the dark graves of
men,—
What whisper'd from her lying
lips?
Thy gloom is kindled at the tips,
And passes into gloom again.

XL.

Could we forget the widow'd hour
And look on Spirits breathed
away,
As on a maiden in the day
When first she wears her orange-
flower!
When crown'd with blessing she doth
rise
To take her latest leave of home,
And hopes and light regrets that
come
Make April of her tender eyes;
And doubtful joys the father move,
And tears are on the mother's
face,
As parting with a long embrace
She enters other realms of love;
Her office there to rear, to teach,
Becoming as is meet and fit
A link among the days, to knit
The generations each with each;
And, doubtless, unto thee is given
A life that bears immortal fruit
In those great offices that suit
The full-grown energies of heaven.
Ay me, the difference I discern!
How often shall her old fireside

Be cheer'd with tidings of the
bride,
How often she herself return,
And tell them all they would have told,
And bring her babe, and make her
boast,
Till even those that miss'd her
most
Shall count new things as dear as old:
But thou and I have shaken hands,
Till growing winters lay me low;
My paths are in the fields I know,
And thine in undiscover'd lands.

XLI.

Thy spirit ere our fatal loss
Did ever rise from high to higher;
As mounts the heavenward altar-
fire,
As flies the lighter thro' the gross.
But thou art turn'd to something
strange,
And I have lost the links that
bound
Thy changes; here upon the
ground,
No more partaker of thy change.
Deep folly! yet that this could be—
That I could wing my will with
might
To leap the grades of life and
light,
And flash at once, my friend, to thee.
For tho' my nature rarely yields
To that vague fear implied in
death;
Nor shudders at the gulf beneath,
The howlings from forgotten fields;
Yet oft when sundown skirts the moor
An inner trouble I behold,
A spectral doubt which makes me
cold,
That I shall be thy mate no more,
Tho' following with an upward mind
The wonders that have come to
thee,

Thro' all the secular to-be,
But evermore a life behind.

XLII.

I vex my heart with fancies dim :
He still outstript me in the race ;
It was but unity of place
That made me dream I rank'd with him.

And so may Place retain us still,
And he the much-beloved again,
A lord of large experience, train
To riper growth the mind and will :

And what delights can equal those
That stir the spirit's inner deeps,
When one that loves but knows
not, reaps
A truth from one that loves and
knows ?

XLIII.

If Sleep and Death be truly one,
And every spirit's folded bloom
Thro' all its interval gloom
In some long trance should slumber
on ;

Unconscious of the sliding hour,
Bare of the body, might it last,
And silent traces of the past
Be all the color of the flower :

So then were nothing lost to man ;
So that still garden of the souls
In many a figured leaf enrolls
The total world since life began ;

And love will last as pure and whole
As when he loved me here in
Time,
And at the spiritual prime
Rewaken with the dawning soul.

XLIV.

How fares it with the happy dead ?
For here the man is more and
more ;
But he forgets the days before
God shut the doorways of his head.

The days have vanish'd, tone and tint,
And yet perhaps the hoarding
sense
Gives out at times (he knows not
whence)
A little flash, a mystic hint ;

And in the long harmonious years
(If Death so taste Lethean
springs),
May some dim touch of earthly
things
Surprise thee ranging with thy peers.

If such a dreamy touch should fall,
O turn thee round, resolve the
doubt ;
My guardian angel will speak out
In that high place, and tell thee all.

XLV.

The baby new to earth and sky,
What time his tender palm is
prest
Against the circle of the breast,
Has never thought that 'this is I :'

But as he grows he gathers much,
And learns the use of 'I,' and
'me,'
And finds 'I am not what I see,
And other than the things I touch.'

So rounds he to a separate mind
From whence clear memory may
begin,
As thro' the frame that binds him
in
His isolation grows defined.

This use may lie in blood and breath,
Which else were fruitless of their
due,
Had man to learn himself anew
Beyond the second birth of Death.

XLVI.

We ranging down this lower track,
The path we came by, thorn and
flower,
Is shadow'd by the growing hour,
Lest life should fail in looking back.



"I WITH MINE AFFIANCED."—Page 52.



So be it: there no shade can last
In that deep dawn behind the
tomb,
But clear from marge to marge
shall bloom
The eternal landscape of the past;

A lifelong tract of time reveal'd;
The fruitful hours of still in-
crease;
Days order'd in a wealthy peace,
And those five years its richest field.

O Love, thy province were not large,
A bounded field, nor stretching
far;
Look also, Love, a brooding star,
A rosy warmth from marge to marge.

XLVII.

That each, who seems a separate
whole,
Should move his rounds, and
fusing all
The skirts of self again, should
fall
Remerging in the general Soul,

Is faith as vague as all unsweet:
Eternal form shall still divide
The eternal soul from all beside;
And I shall know him when we meet:

And we shall sit at endless feast,
Enjoying each the other's good:
What vaster dream can hit the
mood

Of Love on earth? He seeks at least

Upon the last and sharpest height,
Before the spirits fade away,
Some landing-place, to clasp and
say,
'Farewell! We lose ourselves in light.'

XLVIII.

If these brief lays, of Sorrow born,
Were taken to be such as closed
Grave doubts and answers here
proposed,
Then these were such as men might
scorn:

Her care is not to part and prove;
She takes, when harsher moods
remit,
What slender shade of doubt
may flit,
And makes it vassal unto love:

And hence, indeed, she sports with
words,
But better serves a wholesome
law,
And holds it sin and shame to
draw
The deepest measure from the chords:

Nor dare she trust a larger lay,
But rather loosens from the lip
Short swallow-flights of song,
that dip
Their wings in tears, and skim away.

XLIX.

From art, from nature, from the
schools,
Let random influences glance,
Like light in many a shiver'd
lance
That breaks about the dappled pools:

The lightest wave of thought shall lisp,
The fancy's tenderest eddy
wreath,
The slightest air of song shall
breathe

To make the sullen surface crisp.

And look thy look, and go thy way,
But blame not thou the winds
that make
The seeming-wanton ripple break,
The tender-pencil'd shadow play.

Beneath all fancied hopes and fears
Ay me, the sorrow deepens down,
Whose muffled motions blindly
drown

The bases of my life in tears.

L.

Be near me when my light is low,
When the blood creeps, and the
nerves prick

And tingle; and the heart is sick,
And all the wheels of Being slow.

Be near me when the sensuous frame
Is rack'd with pangs that conquer trust;

And Time, a maniac scattering dust,
And Life, a Fury slinging flame.

Be near me when my faith is dry,
And men the flies of latter spring,
That lay their eggs, and sting and sing
And weave their petty cells and die.

Be near me when I fade away,
To point the term of human strife,
And on the low dark verge of life
The twilight of eternal day.

LI.

Do we indeed desire the dead
Should still be near us at our side?

Is there no baseness we would hide?
No inner vileness that we dread?

Shall he for whose applause I strove,
I had such reverence for his blame,

See with clear eye some hidden shame
And I be lessen'd in his love?

I wrong the grave with fears untrue;
Shall love be blamed for want of faith?

There must be wisdom with great Death:
The dead shall look me thro' and thro'.

Be near us when we climb or fall:
Ye watch, like God, the rolling hours

With larger other eyes than ours,
To make allowance for us all.

LII.

I cannot love thee as I ought,
For love reflects the thing be-
loved;

My words are only words, and moved
Upon the topmost froth of thought.

'Yet blame not thou thy plaintive song,'
The Spirit of true love replied;

'Thou canst not move me from thy side,
Nor human frailty do me wrong.

'What keeps a spirit wholly true
To that ideal which he bears?
What record? not the sinless years
That breathed beneath the Syrian blue:

'So fret not, like an idle girl,
That life is dash'd with flecks of sin,
Abide: thy wealth is gather'd in,
When Time hath sunder'd shell from pearl.'

LIII.

How many a father have I seen,
A sober man, among his boys,
Whose youth was full of foolish noise,
Who wears his manhood hale and green:

And dare we to this fancy give,
That had the wild oat not been sown,
The soil, left barren, scarce had grown
The grain by which a man may live?

Or, if we held the doctrine sound
For life outliving heats of youth,
Yet who would preach it as a truth
To those that eddy round and round?

Hold thou the good: define it well:
For fear divine Philosophy
Should push beyond her mark,
and be
Procuress to the Lords of Hell.

LIV.

Oh yet we trust that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill,
To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood;

That nothing walks with aimless feet;
That not one life shall be de-
stroy'd.

Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile com-
plete;

That not a worm is cloven in vain;
That not a moth with vain desire
Is shrivell'd in a fruitless fire,
Or but subserves another's gain.

Behold, we know not anything;
I can but trust that good shall fall
At last—far off—at last, to all,
And every winter change to spring.

So runs my dream: but what am I?
An infant crying in the night:
An infant crying for the light:
And with no language but a cry.

LV.

The wish, that of the living whole
No life may fail beyond the grave,
Derives it not from what we have
The likest God within the soul?

Are God and Nature then at strife,
That Nature lends such evil
dreams?

So careful of the type she seems,
So careless of the single life;

That I, considering everywhere
Her secret meaning in her deeds,
And finding that of fifty seeds
She often brings but one to bear,

I falter where I firmly trod,
And falling with my weight of
cares

Upon the great world's altar-stairs
That slope thro' darkness up to God,

I stretch lame hands of faith, and
grope,

And gather dust and chaff, and call
To what I feel is Lord of all,
And faintly trust the larger hope.

LVI.

'So careful of the type?' but no.
From scarp'd cliff and quarried
stone

She cries, 'A thousand types are
gone:
I care for nothing, all shall go.

'Thou makest thine appeal to me:
I bring to life, I bring to death:
The spirit does but mean the
breath:

I know no more.' And he, shall he,
Man, her last work, who seem'd so fair,
Such splendid purpose in his eyes,
Who roll'd the psalm to wintry
skies,

Who built him fanes of fruitless prayer,
Who trusted God was love indeed
And love Creation's final law—
Tho' Nature, red in tooth and claw
With ravine, shriek'd against his
creed—

Who loved, who suffer'd countless ills
Who battled for the True, the Just,
Be blown about the desert dust,
Or seal'd within the iron hills?

No more? A monster then, a dream,
A discord. Dragons of the prime,
That tare each other in their
slime,
Were mellow music match'd with him.

O life as futile, then, as frail!
O for thy voice to soothe and
bless!

What hope of answer, or redress?
Behind the veil, behind the veil.

LVII.

Peace; come away: the song of woe
Is after all an earthly song:
Peace; come away: we do him
wrong

To sing so wildly: let us go.

Come; let us go: your cheeks are
pale;
But half my life I leave behind:
Methinks my friend is richly
shrined;
But I shall pass; my work will fail.

Yet in these ears, till hearing dies,
One set slow bell will seem to toll
The passing of the sweetest soul
That ever look'd with human eyes.

I hear it now, and o'er and o'er,
Eternal greetings to the dead;
And 'Ave, Ave, Ave,' said,
'Adieu, adieu' for evermore.

LVIII.

In those sad words I took farewell:
Like echoes in sepulchral halls,
As drop by drop the water falls
In vaults and catacombs, they fell;

And, falling, idly broke the peace
Of hearts that beat from day to
day,
Half-conscious of their dying clay,
And those old crypts where they shall
cease.

The high Muse answer'd: 'Wherefore
grieve
Thy brethren with a fruitless tear?
Abide a little longer here,
And thou shalt take a nobler leave.'

LIX.

Sorrow, wilt thou live with me
No casual mistress, but a wife,
My bosom-friend and half of life;
As I confess it needs must be;

O Sorrow, wilt thou rule my blood,
Be sometimes lovely like a bride,
And put thy harsher moods aside,
If thou wilt have me wise and good.

My centred passion cannot move,
Nor will it lesson from to-day
But I'll have leave at times to play
As with the creature of my love;

And set thee forth, for thou art mine,
With so much hope for years to
come,
That, howso'er I know thee, some
Could hardly tell what name were
thine.

LX.

He past; a soul of nobler tone
My spirit loved and loves him yet,
Like some poor girl whose heart
is set
On one whose rank exceeds her own.

He mixing with his proper sphere,
She finds the baseness of her lot,
Half jealous of she knows not
what,
And envying all that meet him there.

The little village looks forlorn;
She sighs amid her narrow days,
Moving about the household ways,
In that dark house where she was born.

The foolish neighbors come and go,
And tease her till the day draws
by:
At night she weeps, 'How vain
am I!
How should he love a thing so low?'

LXI.

If, in thy second state sublime,
Thy ransom'd reason change re-
plies
With all the circle of the wise,
The perfect flower of human time;

And if thou cast thine eyes below,
How dimly character'd and slight,
How dwarf'd a growth of cold
and night,
How blanch'd with darkness must I
grow!

Yet turn thee to the doubtful shore,
Where thy first form was made a
man;
I loved thee, Spirit, and love, nor
can
The soul of Shakspeare love thee more.

LXII.

Tho' if an eye that's downward cast
 Could make thee somewhat
 blench or fail,
 Then be my love an idle tale,
 And fading legend of the past;

And thou, as one that once declined,
 When he was little more than
 boy,
 On some unworthy heart with
 joy,
 But lives to wed an equal mind;

And breathes a novel world, the while
 His other passion wholly dies,
 Or in the light of deeper eyes
 Is matter for a flying smile.

LXIII.

Yet pity for a horse o'er-driven,
 And love in which my hound has
 part,
 Can hang no weight upon my
 heart

In its assumptions up to heaven;

And I am so much more than these,
 As thou, perchance, art more
 than I,

And yet I spare them sympathy,
 And I would set their pains at ease.

So mayst thou watch me where I
 weep,

As, unto vaster motions bound,
 The circuits of thine orbit round
 A higher height, a deeper deep.

LXIV.

Dost thou look back on what hath
 been,

As some divinely gifted man,
 Whose life in low estate began
 And on a simple village green;

Who breaks his birth's invidious bar,
 And grasps the skirts of happy
 chance,

And breasts the blows of circum-
 stance,
 And grapples with his evil star;

Who makes by force his merit known
 And lives to clutch the golden
 keys,
 To mould a mighty state's
 decrees,
 And shape the whisper of the throne;

And moving up from high to higher,
 Becomes on Fortune's crowning
 slope
 The pillar of a people's hope,
 The centre of a world's desire;

Yet feels, as in a pensive dream,
 When all his active powers are
 still,
 A distant dearness in the hill,
 A secret sweetness in the stream,

The limit of his narrower fate,
 While yet beside its vocal springs
 He play'd at counsellors and
 kings,
 With one that was his earliest mate;

Who ploughs with pain his native lea
 And reaps the labor of his
 hands,
 Or in the furrow musing stands;
 'Does my old friend remember me?'

LXV.

Sweet soul, do with me as thou wilt;
 I lull a fancy trouble-tost
 With 'Love's too precious to be
 lost,
 A little grain shall not be spilt.'

And in that solace can I sing,
 Till out of painful phases
 wrought
 There flutters up a happy
 thought,
 Self-balanced on a lightsome wing:

Since we deserved the name of
 friends,
 And thine effect so lives in me,
 A part of mine may live in thee
 And move thee on to noble ends.

LXVI.

You thought my heart too far dis-
eased;
You wonder when my fancies
play
To find me gay among the gay,
Like one with any trifle pleased.

The shade by which my life was crost,
Which makes a desert in the
mind,
Has made me kindly with my
kind,
And like to him whose sight is lost;

Whose feet are guided thro' the land,
Whose jest among his friends is
free,
Who takes the children on his
knee,
And winds their curls about his hand:

He plays with threads, he beats his
chair
For pastime, dreaming of the
sky;
His inner day can never die,
His night of loss is always there.

LXVII.

When on my bed the moonlight falls,
I know that in thy place of rest
By that broad water of the west,
There comes a glory on the walls:

Thy marble bright in dark appears,
As slowly steals a silver flame
Along the letters of thy name,
And o'er the number of thy years.

The mystic glory swims away;
From off my bed the moonlight
dies;
And closing caves of wearied
eyes
I sleep till dusk is dipt in gray:

And then I know the mist is drawn
A lucid veil from coast to coast,
And in the dark church like a
ghost
Thy tablet glimmers to the dawn.

LXVIII.

When in the down I sink my head,
Sleep, Death's twin-brother, times
my breath;
Sleep, Death's twin-brother,
knows not Death,
Nor can I dream of thee as dead:

I walk as ere I walk'd forlorn,
When all our path was fresh with
dew,
And all the bugle breezes blew
Reveillé to the breaking morn.

But what is this? I turn about,
I find a trouble in thine eye,
Which makes me sad I know not
why,
Nor can my dream resolve the doubt:

But ere the lark hath left the lea
I wake, and I discern the truth;
It is the trouble of my youth
That foolish sleep transfers to thee.

LXIX.

I dream'd there would be Spring no
more,
That Nature's ancient power was
lost:
The streets were black with
smoke and frost,
They chatter'd trifles at the door:

I wander'd from the noisy town,
I found a wood with thorny
boughs:
I took the thorns to bind my
brows,
I wore them like a civic crown:

I met with scoffs, I met with scorns
From youth and babe and hoary
hairs:
They call'd me in the public
squares
The fool that wears a crown of
thorns:

They call'd me fool, they call'd me
child:
I found an angel of the night;

The voice was low, the look was
bright;
He look'd upon my crown and smiled:
He reach'd the glory of a hand,
That seem'd to touch it into leaf:
The voice was not the voice of
grief,
The words were hard to understand.

LXX.

I cannot see the features right,
When on the gloom I strive to
paint
The face I know; the hues are
faint
And mix with hollow masks of night;
Cloud-towers by ghostly masons
wrought,
A gulf that ever shuts and gapes,
A hand that points, and palled
shapes
In shadowy thoroughfares of
thought;

And crowds that stream from yawning
doors,
And shoals of pucker'd faces
drive;
Dark bulks that tumble half alive,
And lazy lengths on boundless shores;
Till all at once beyond the will
I hear a wizard music roll,
And thro' a lattice on the soul
Looks thy fair face and makes it still.

LXXI.

Sleep, kinsman thou to death and
trance
And madness, thou hast forged at
last
A night-long Present of the Past
In which we went thro' summer
France.

Hadst thou such credit with the soul?
Then bring an opiate treble strong,
Drug down the blindfold sense of
wrong
That so my pleasure may be whole;

While now we talk as once we talk'd
Of men and minds, the dust of
change,
The days that grow to something
strange,
In walking as of old we walk'd

Beside the river's wooded reach,
The fortress, and the mountain
ridge,
The cataract flashing from the
bridge,
The breaker breaking on the beach.

LXXII.

Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again,
And howlest, issuing out of night,
With blasts that blow the poplar
white,
And lash with storm the streaming
pane?

Day, when my crown'd estate begun
To pine in that reverse of doom,
Which sicken'd every living
bloom,
And blurr'd the splendor of the sun;

Who usherest in the dolorous hour
With thy quick tears that make
the rose
Pull sideways, and the daisy close
Her crimson fringes to the shower;

Who might'st have heaved a windless
flame
Up the deep East, or, whispering,
play'd
A chequer-work of beam and
shade
Along the hills, yet look'd the same.

As wan, as chill, as wild as now;
Day, mark'd as with some hideous
crime,
When the dark hand struck down
thro' time,
And cancell'd nature's best: but thou,

Lift as thou may'st thy burthen'd brows
Thro' clouds that drench the
morning star,

And whirl the ungarner'd sheaf
afar,
And sow the sky with flying boughs,
And up thy vault with roaring sound
Climb thy thick noon, disastrous
day;
Touch thy dull goal of joyless
gray,
And hide thy shame beneath the
ground.

LXXIII.

So many worlds, so much to do,
So little done, such things to be,
How know I what had need of
thee,
For thou wert strong as thou wert
true?

The fame is quench'd that I foresaw,
The head hath miss'd an earthly
wreath:
I curse not nature, no, nor death;
For nothing is that errs from law.

We pass; the path that each man
trod
Is dim, or will be dim, with
weeds:
What fame is left for human
deeds
In endless age? It rests with God.

O hollow wraith of dying fame,
Fade wholly, while the soul exults,
And self-infolds the large results
Of force that would have forged a
name.

LXXIV.

As sometimes in a dead man's face,
To those that watch it more and
more,
A likeness, hardly seen before,
Comes out—to some one of his race:
So, dearest, now thy brows are cold,
I see thee what thou art, and
know
Thy likeness to the wise below,
Thy kindred with the great of old.

But there is more than I can see,
And what I see I leave unsaid,
Nor speak it, knowing Death has
made
His darkness beautiful with thee.

LXXV.

I leave thy praises unexpress'd
In verse that brings myself relief,
And by the measure of my grief
I leave thy greatness to be guess'd;

What practice howsoe'er expert
In fitting aptest words to things,
Or voice the richest-toned that
sings,
Hath power to give thee as thou wert?

I care not in these fading days
To raise a cry that lasts not long,
And round thee with the breeze of
song
To stir a little dust of praise.

Thy leaf has perish'd in the green,
And, while we breathe beneath
the sun,
The world which credits what is
done
Is cold to all that might have been.

So here shall silence guard thy fame;
But somewhere, out of human
view,
Whate'er thy hands are set to do
Is wrought with tumult of acclaim.

LXXVI.

Take wings of fancy, and ascend,
And in a moment set thy face
Where all the starry heavens of
space
Are sharpen'd to a needle's end;

Take wings of foresight; lighten thro'
The secular abyss to come,
And lo, thy deepest lays are dumb
Before the mouldering of a yew;

And if the matin songs, that woke
The darkness of our planet, last,

Thine own shall wither in the
vast,
Ere half the lifetime of an oak.

Ere these have clothed their branchy
bowers
With fifty Mays, thy songs are
vain;
And what are they when these
remain
The ruin'd shells of hollow towers?

LXXVII.

What hope is here for modern rhyme
To him, who turns a musing eye
On songs, and deeds, and lives,
that lie
Foreshorten'd in the tract of time?

These mortal lullabies of pain
May bind a book, may line a box,
May serve to curl a maiden's
locks;
Or when a thousand moons shall wane

A man upon a stall may find,
And, passing, turn the page that
tells
A grief, then changed to some-
thing else,
Sung by a long-forgotten mind.

But what of that? My darken'd ways
Shall ring with music all the
same;
To breathe my loss is more than
fame,
To utter love more sweet than praise.

LXXVIII.

Again at Christmas did we weave
The holly round the Christmas
hearth;
The silent snow possess'd the
earth,
And calmly fell our Christmas-eve:

The yule-clog sparkled keen with frost,
No wing of wind the region swept,
But over all things brooding slept
The quiet sense of something lost.

As in the winters left behind,
Again our ancient games had
place,
The mimic picture's breathing
grace,
And dance and song and hoodman-
blind.

Who show'd a token of distress?
No single tear, no mark of pain:
O sorrow, then can sorrow wane?
O grief, can grief be changed to less?

O last regret, regret can die!
No—mixt with all this mystic
frame,
Her deep relations are the same,
But with long use her tears are dry.

LXXIX.

'More than my brothers are to me,'—
Let this not vex thee, noble
heart!
I know thee of what force thou
art
To hold the costliest love in fee.

But thou and I are one in kind,
As moulded like in Nature's
mint;
And hill and wood and field did
print
The same sweet forms in either mind.

For us the same cold streamlet curl'd
Thro' all his eddying coves; the
same
All winds that roam the twilight
came
In whispers of the beauteous world.

At one dear knee we proffer'd vows,
One lesson from one book we
learn'd,
Ere childhood's flaxen ringlet
turn'd
To black and brown on kindred
brows.

And so my wealth resembles thine,
But he was rich where I was
poor,

And he supplied my want the
more
As his unlikeness fitted mine.

LXXX.

If any vague desire should rise,
That holy Death ere Arthur died
Had moved me kindly from his
side,
And dropt the dust on tearless eyes;
Then fancy shapes, as fancy can,
The grief my loss in him had
wrought,
A grief as deep as life or thought,
But stay'd in peace with God and man.

I made a picture in the brain;
I hear the sentence that he
speaks;
He bears the burthen of the
weeks
But turns his burthen into gain.

His credit thus shall set me free;
And, influence-rich to soothe and
save,
Unused example from the grave
Reach out dead hands to comfort me.

LXXXI.

Could I have said while he was here,
'My love shall now no further
range;
There cannot come a mellow
change,
For now is love mature in ear.'

Love, then, had hope of richer store:
What end is here to my com-
plaint?
This haunting whisper makes me
faint,
'More years had made me love thee
more.'

But Death returns an answer sweet:
'My sudden frost was sudden
gain,
And gave all ripeness to the
grain,
It might have drawn from after-heat.'

LXXXII.

I wage not any feud with Death
For changes wrought on form
and face;
No lower life that earth's
embrace
May breed with him, can fright my
faith.

Eternal process moving on,
From state to state the spirit
walks;
And these are but the shatter'd
stalks,
Or ruin'd chrysalis of one.

Nor blame I Death, because he bare
The use of virtue out of earth:
I know transplanted human
worth
Will bloom to profit, elsewhere.

For this alone on Death I wreak
The wrath that garners in my
heart:
He put our lives so far apart
We cannot hear each other speak.

LXXXIII.

Dip down upon the northern shore,
O sweet new-year delaying long:
Thou doest expectant nature
wrong;
Delaying long, delay no more.

What stays thee from the clouded
noons,
Thy sweetness from its proper
place?
Can trouble live with April days,
Or sadness in the summer moons?

Bring orchis. bring the foxglove spire,
The little speedwell's darling blue,
Deep tulips dash'd with fiery
dew,

Laburnums, dropping-wells of fire.

O thou, new-year, delaying long,
Delayest the sorrow in my blood,
That longs to burst a frozen bud
And flood a fresher throat with song.

LXXXIV.

When I contemplate all alone
The life that had been thine
below,
And fix my thoughts on all the
glow
To which thy crescent would have
grown;

I see thee sitting crown'd with good,
A central warmth diffusing bliss
In glance and smile, and clasp
and kiss,
On all the branches of thy blood;

Thy blood, my friend, and partly
mine;
For now the day was drawing on,
When thou should'st link thy life
with one
Of mine own house, and boys of thine

Had babbled 'Uncle' on my knee;
But that remorseless iron hour
Made cypress of her orange
flower,
Despair of Hope, and earth of thee.

I seem to meet their least desire,
To clap their cheeks, to call them
mine.
I see their unborn faces shine
Beside the never-lighted fire.

I see myself an honor'd guest,
Thy partner in the flowery walk
Of letters, genial table-talk,
Or deep dispute, and graceful jest;

While now thy prosperous labor fills
The lips of men with honest
praise,
And sun by sun the happy days
Descend below the golden hills

With promise of a morn as fair;
And all the train of bounteous
hours
Conduct by paths of growing
powers,
To reverence and the silver hair;

Till slowly worn her earthly robe,
Her lavish mission richly
wrought,
Leaving great legacies of thought,
Thy spirit should fall from off the
globe;

What time mine own might also flee,
As link'd with thine in love and
fate,
And, hovering o'er the dolorous
strait
To the other shore, involved in thee,

Arrive at last the blessed goal,
And He that died in Holy Land
Would reach us out the shining
hand,
And take us as a single soul.

What reed was that on which I leant?
Ah, backward fancy, wherefore
wake
The old bitterness again, and
break
The low beginnings of content.

LXXXV.

This truth came borne with bier and
pall,
I felt it, when I sorrow'd most,
'Tis better to have loved and lost,
Than never to have loved at all—

O true in word, and tried in deed,
Demanding, so to bring relief
To this which is our common
grief,
What kind of life is that I lead;

And whether trust in things above
Be dimm'd of sorrow, or sus-
tain'd;
And whether love for him have
drain'd
My capabilities of love;

Your words have virtue such as
draws
A faithful answer from the
breast,

Thro' light reproaches, half
express,
And loyal unto kindly laws.

My blood an even tenor kept,
Till on mine ear this message
falls,
That in Vienna's fatal walls
God's finger touch'd him, and he
slept.

The great Intelligences fair
That range above our mortal
state,
In circle round the blessed gate,
Received and gave him welcome there;

And led him thro' the blissful climes,
And show'd him in the fountain
fresh
All knowledge that the sons of
flesh
Shall gather in the cycled times.

But I remain'd, whose hopes were
dim,
Whose life, whose thoughts were
little worth,
To wander on a darken'd earth,
Where all things round me breathed
of him.

O friendship, equal-poised control,
O heart, with kindest motion
warm,
O sacred essence, other form,
O solemn ghost, O crowned soul!

Yet none could better know than I,
How much of act at human hands
The sense of human will demands
By which we dare to live or die.

Whatever way my days decline,
I felt and feel, tho' left alone,
His being working in mine own,
The footsteps of his life in mine;

A life that all the Muses deck'd
With gifts of grace, that might
express
All-comprehensive tenderness,
All-subtilizing intellect:

And so my passion hath not swerved
To works of weakness, but I find
An image comforting the mind,
And in my grief a strength reserved.

Likewise the imaginative woe,
That loved to handle spiritual
strife,
Diffused the shock thro' all my
life,
But in the present broke the blow.

My pulses therefore beat again
For other friends that once I met;
Nor can it suit me to forget
The mighty hopes that make us men.

I woo your love: I count it crime
To mourn for any overmuch;
I, the divided half of such
A friendship as had master'd Time;

Which masters Time indeed, and is
Eternal, separate from fears:
The all-assuming months and
years
Can take no part away from this:

But Summer on the steaming floods,
And Spring that swells the narrow
brooks,
And Autumn, with a noise of
rooks,
That gather in the waning woods,

And every pulse of wind and wave
Recalls, in change of light or
gloom,
My old affection of the tomb,
And my prime passion in the grave:

My old affection of the tomb,
A part of stillness, yearns to
speak:
'Arise, and get thee forth and
seek
A friendship for the years to come.

'I watch thee from the quiet shore;
Thy spirit up to mine can reach;
But in dear words of human
speech
We two communicate no more.'

And I, 'Can clouds of nature stain
The starry clearness of the free?
How is it? Canst thou feel for
me
Some painless sympathy with pain?'

And lightly does the whisper fall;
'Tis hard for thee to fathom
this:
I triumph in conclusive bliss,
And that serene result of all.'

So hold I commerce with the dead;
Or so methinks the dead would
say;
Or so shall grief with symbols
play
And pining life be fancy-fed.

Now looking to some settled end,
That these things pass, and I
shall prove
A meeting somewhere, love with
love,
I crave your pardon, O my friend;

If not so fresh, with love as true,
I, clasping brother-hands, aver
I could not, if I would, transfer
The whole I felt for him to you.

For which be they that hold apart
The promise of the golden hours?
First love, first friendship, equal
powers,
That warry with the virgin heart.

Still mine, that cannot but deplore,
That beats within a lonely place,
That yet remembers his embrace,
But at his footstep leaps no more,

My heart, tho' widow'd, may not rest
Quite in the love of what is gone,
But seeks to beat in time with one
That warms another living breast.

Ah, take the imperfect gift I bring,
Knowing the primrose yet is dear,
The primrose of the later year,
As not unlike to that of Spring.

LXXXVI.

Sweet after showers, ambrosial air,
That rollest from the gorgeous
gloom
Of evening over brake and bloom
And meadow, slowly breathing bare

The round of space, and rapt below
Thro' all the dewy-tassel'd wood,
And shadowing down the horned
flood
In ripples, fan my brows and blow

The fever from my cheek, and sigh
The full new life that feeds thy
breath
Throughout my frame, till Doubt
and Death,
Ill brethren, let the fancy fly

From belt to belt of crimson seas
On leagues of odor streaming far,
To where in yonder orient star
A hundred spirits whisper 'Peace.'

LXXXVII.

I past beside the reverend walls
In which of old I wore the gown;
I roved at random thro' the town,
And saw the tumult of the halls;

And heard once more in college fanes
The storm their high-built organs
make,
And thunder-music, rolling, shake
The prophet blazon'd on the panes;

And caught once more the distant
shout,
The measured pulse of racing oars
Among the willows; paced the
shores
And many a bridge, and all about

The same gray flats again, and felt
The same, but not the same; and
last
Up that long walk of limes I past
To see the rooms in which he dwelt.

Another name was on the door:
I linger'd; all within was noise

Of songs, and clapping hands, and
boys
That crash'd the glass and beat the
floor;

Where once we held debate, a band
Of youthful friends, on mind and
art,
And labor, and the changing mart,
And all the framework of the land;

When one would aim an arrow fair,
But send it slackly from the
string;
And one would pierce an outer
ring,
And one an inner, here and there;

And last the master-bowman, he,
Would cleave the mark. A will-
ing ear
We lent him. Who, but hung to
hear
The rapt oration flowing free

From point to point, with power and
grace
And music in the bounds of law,
To those conclusions when we saw
The God within him light his face,

And seem to lift the form, and glow
In azure orbits heavenly-wise;
And over those ethereal eyes
The bar of Michael Angelo.

LXXXVIII.

Wild bird, whose warble, liquid sweet,
Rings Eden thro' the budded
quicks,

O tell me where the senses mix,
O tell me where the passions meet,

Whence radiate: fierce extremes em-
ploy

Thy spirits in the darkening leaf.
And in the midmost heart of grief
Thy passion clasps a secret joy:

And I—my harp would prelude woe—
I cannot all command the strings;
The glory of the sum of things
Will flash along the cords and go.

LXXXIX.

Witch-elms that counterchange the
floor
Of this flat lawn with dusk and
bright;
And thou, with all thy breadth and
height
Of foliage, towering sycamore;

How often, hither wander'ng down,
My Arthur found your shadows
fair,
And shook to all the liberal air
The dust and din and steam of town:

He brought an eye for all he saw;
He mixt in all our simple sports;
They pleased him, fresh from
brawling courts
And dusty purlieus of the law.

O joy to him in this retreat,
Immantled in ambrosial dark,
To drink the cooler air, and mark
The landscape winking thro' the heat:

O sound to rout the brood of cares,
The sweep of scythe in morning
dew,
The gust that round the garden
flew,
And tumbled half the mellowing pears!

O bliss, when all in circle drawn
About him, heart and ear were fed
To hear him, as he lay and read
The Tuscan poets on the lawn:

Or in the all-golden afternoon
A guest, or happy sister, sung,
Or here she brought the harp and
flung
A ballad to the brightening moon:

Nor less it pleased in livelier moods,
Beyond the bounding hill to stray,
And break the livelong summer
day

With banquet in the distant woods;

Whereat we glanced from theme to
theme,

Discuss'd the books to love or hate,
Or touch'd the changes of the state,
Or threaded some Socratic dream;

But if I praised the busy town,
He loved to rail against it still,
For 'ground in yonder social mill
We rub each other's angles down,

'And merge' he said 'in form and
gloss
The picturesque of man and man.'
We talk'd: the stream beneath
us ran,

The wine-flask lying couch'd in moss,

Or cool'd within the glooming wave;
And last, returning from afar,
Before the crimson-circled star
Had fall'n into her father's grave,

And brushing ankle-deep in flowers,
We heard behind the woodbine
veil

The milk that bubbled in the pail,
And buzzings of the honied hours.

XC.

He tasted love with half his mind,
Nor ever drank the inviolate
spring
Where highest heaven, who first
could fling
This bitter seed among mankind;

That could the dead, whose dying eyes
Were closed with wail, resume
their life,
They would but find in child and
wife

An iron welcome when they rise:

'Twas well, indeed, when warm with
wine,
To pledge them with a kindly tear,
To talk them o'er, to wish them
here,
To count their memories half divine;

But if they came who past away,
Behold their brides in other
hands;

The hard heir strides about their
lands,
And will not yield them for a day.

Yea, tho' their sons were none of these,
Not less the yet-loved sire would
make
Confusion worse than death, and
shake

The pillars of domestic peace.

Ah dear, but come thou back to me:
Whatever change the years have
wrought,

I find not yet one lonely thought
That cries against my wish for thee.

XCI.

When rosy plumelets tuft the larch,
And rarely pipes the mounted
thrush;

Or underneath the barren bush
Flits by the sea-blue bird of March;

Come, wear the form by which I know
Thy spirit in time among thy
peers;

The hope of unaccomplish'd years
Be large and lucid round thy brow.

When summer's hourly-mellowing
change

May breathe, with many roses
sweet,

Upon the thousand waves of
wheat,
That ripple round the lonely grange;

Come: not in watches of the night,
But where the sunbeam broodeth
warm,

Come, beauteous in thine after
form,
And like a finer light in light.

XCII.

If any vision should reveal
Thy likeness, I might count it vain
As but the canker of the brain;
Yea, tho' it spake and made appeal

To chances where our lots were cast
Together in the days behind,

I might but say, I hear a wind
Of memory murmuring the past.

Yea, tho' it spake and bared to view
A fact within the coming year;
And tho' the months, revolving
near,
Should prove the phantom-warning
true,

They might not seem thy prophecies,
But spiritual presentiments,
And such refraction of events
As often rises ere they rise.

XCIII.

I shall not see thee. Dare I say
No spirit ever brake the band
That stays him from the native
land
Where first he walk'd when claspt in
clay?

No visual shade of some one lost.
But he, the Spirit himself, may
come
Where all the nerve of sense is
numb;
Spirit to Spirit, Ghost to Ghost.

O, therefore from thy sightless range
With gods in un conjectured bliss,
O, from the distance of the abyss
Of tenfold-complicated change,

Descend, and touch, and enter; hear
The wish too strong for words to
name;
That in this blindness of the frame
My Ghost may feel that thine is near.

XCIV.

How pure at heart and sound in head,
With what divine affections bold
Should be the man whose thought
would hold
An hour's communion with the dead.

In vain shalt thou, or any, call
The spirits from their golden day,
Except, like them, thou too canst
say,
My spirit is at peace with all.

They haunt the silence of the breast,
Imaginations calm and fair,
The memory like a cloudless air,
The conscience as a sea at rest.

But when the heart is full of din,
And doubt beside the portal waits,
They can but listen at the gates,
And hear the household jar within.

XCV.

By night we linger'd on the lawn,
For underfoot the herb was dry;
And genial warmth; and o'er the
sky
The silvery haze of summer drawn;

And calm that let the tapers burn
Unwavering: not a cricket chirr'd:
The brook alone far-off was heard,
And on the board the fluttering urn:

And bats went round in fragrant skies,
And wheel'd or lit the filmy shapes
That haunt the dusk, with crimine
capes
And woolly breasts and beaded eyes;

While now we sang old songs that
peal'd
From knoll to knoll, where,
couch'd at ease,
The white kinc glimmer'd, and
the trees
Laid their dark arms about the field.

But when those others, one by one,
Withdrew themselves from me
and night,
And in the house light after light
Went out, and I was all alone,

A hunger seized my heart; I read
Of that glad year which once had
been,
In those fall'n leaves which kept
their green,
The noble letters of the dead:

And strangely on the silence broke
The silent-speaking words, and
strange

Was love's dumb cry defying
change
To test his worth; and strangely
spoke

The faith, the vigor, bold to dwell
On doubts that drive the coward
back,
And keen thro' wordy snares to
track
Suggestion to her inmost cell.

So word by word, and line by line,
The dead man touch'd me from
the past,
And all at once it seem'd at last
The living soul was flash'd on mine,

And mine in this was wound, and
whirl'd
About empyreal heights of
thought,
And came on that which is, and
caught
The deep pulsations of the world,

Æonian music measuring out
The steps of Time—the shocks
of Chance—
The blows of Death. At length
my trance
Was cancell'd, stricken thro' with
doubt.

Vague words! but ah, how hard to
frame
In matter-moulded forms of
speech,
Or ev'n for intellect to reach
Thro' memory that which I became:

Till now the doubtful dusk reveal'd
The knolls once more where,
couch'd at ease,
The white kine glimmer'd, and the
trees

Laid their dark arms about the field:

And suck'd from out the distant gloom
A breeze began to tremble o'er
The large leaves of the sycamore,
And fluctuate all the still perfume

And gathering freshlrier overhead,
Rock'd the full-foliaged elms, and
swung
The heavy-folded rose, and flung
The lilies to and fro, and said

'The dawn, the dawn,' and died
away;
And East and West, without a
breath,
Mixt their dim lights, like life
and death,
To broaden into boundless day.

XCVI.

You say, but with no touch of scorn,
Sweet-hearted, you, whose light-
blue eyes
Are tender over drowning flies,
You tell me, doubt is Devil-born.

I know not: one indeed I knew
In many a subtle question versed,
Who touch'd a jarring lyre at
first,
But ever strove to make it true:

Perplex in faith, but pure in deeds,
At last he beat his music out.
There lives more faith in honest
doubt,
Believe me, than in half the creeds.

He fought his doubts and gather'd
strength,
He would not make his judgment
blind,
He faced the spectres of the mind
And laid them: thus he came at length

To find a stronger faith his own;
And Power was with him in the
night,
Which makes the darkness and
the light,
And dwells not in the light alone,

But in the darkness and the cloud,
As over Sinai's peaks of old,
While Israel made their gods of
gold,
Altho' the trumpet blew so loud.

XCVII.

My love has talk'd with rocks and
trees;
He finds on misty mountain-
ground
His own vast shadow glory-
crown'd;
He sees himself in all he sees.

Two partners of a married life—
I look'd on these and thought of
thee
In vastness and in mystery,
And of my spirit as of a wife.

These two—they dwelt with eye on
eye,
Their hearts of old have beat in
tune,
Their meetings made December
June,
Their every parting was to die.

Their love has never past away;
The days she never can forget
Are earnest that he loves her yet,
Whate'er the faithless people say.

Her life is lone, he sits apart,
He loves her yet, she will not
weep,
Tho' rapt in matters dark and
deep
He seems to slight her simple heart.

He thrids the labyrinth of the mind,
He reads the secret of the star,
He seems so near and yet so far,
He looks so cold: she thinks him
kind.

She keeps the gift of years before,
A wither'd violet is her bliss:
She knows not what his greatness
is,

For that, for all, she loves him more.

For him she plays, to him she sings
Of early faith and plighted vows;
She knows but matters of the
house,
And he, he knows a thousand things.

Her faith is fixt and cannot move,
She darkly feels him great and
wise,
She dwells on him with faithful
eyes,
'I cannot understand: I love.'

XCVIII.

You leave us: you will see the Rhine,
And those fair hills I sail'd below,
When I was there with him; and
go

By summer belts of wheat and vine

To where he breathed his latest
breath,
That City. All her splendor
seems
No livelier than the wisp that
gleams
On Lethe in the eyes of Death.

Let her great Danube rolling fair
Enwind her isles, unmark'd of
me:
I have not seen, I will not see
Vienna; rather dream that there,

A treble darkness, Evil haunts
The birth, the bridal; friend from
friend
Is oftener parted, fathers bend
Above more graves, a thousand wants

Gnarr at the heels of men, and pray
By each cold hearth, and sadness
flings
Her shadow on the blaze of
kings:
And yet myself have heard him say,

That not in any mother town
With statelier progress to and fro
The double tides of chariots flow
By park and suburb under brown

Of lustier leaves; nor more content,
He told me, lives in any crowd,
When all is gay with lamps, and
loud
With sport and song, in booth and
tent,

Imperial halls, or open plain;
And wheels the circled dance,
and breaks
The rocket molten into flakes
Of crimson or in emerald rain.

XCIX.

Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again,
So loud with voices of the birds,
So thick with lowings of the
herds,
Day, when I lost the flower of men;

Who tremblest thro' thy darkling red
On yon swoll'n brook that bubbles fast
By meadows breathing of the
past,
And woodlands holy to the dead;

Who murest in the foliaged eaves
A song that slights the coming
care,
And Autumn laying here and
there
A fiery finger on the leaves;

Who wakenest with thy balmy breath
To myriads on the genial earth,
Memories of bridal, or of birth,
And unto myriads more, of death.

O wheresoever those may be,
Betwixt the slumber of the poles,
To-day they count as kindred
souls;
They know me not, but mourn with
me.

C.

I climb the hill: from end to end
Of all the landscape underneath,
I find no place that does not
breathe
Some gracious memory of my friend;

No gray old grange, or lonely fold,
Or low morass and whispering
reed,
Or simple stile from mead to
mead,
Or sheepwalk up the windy wold;

Nor hoary knoll of ash and haw
That hears the latest linnet trill,
Nor quarry trench'd along the
hill
And haunted by the wrangling daw;

Nor runlet tinkling from the rock;
Nor pastoral rivulet that swerves
To left and right thro' meadow
curves,
That feed the mothers of the flock;

But each has pleased a kindred eye,
And each reflects a kindlier day;
And, leaving these, to pass away,
I think once more he seems to die.

CI.

Unwatch'd, the garden bough shall
sway,
The tender blossom flutter down,
Unloved, that beech will gather
brown,
This maple burn itself away;

Unloved, the sun-flower, shining fair,
Ray round with flames her disk of
seed,
And many a rose-carnation feed
With summer spice the humming air;

Unloved, by many a sandy bar,
The brook shall babble down the
plain,
At noon or when the lesser wain
Is twisting round the polar star;

Uncared for, gird the windy grove,
And flood the haunts of hern and
crake;
Or into silver arrows break
The sailing moon in creek and cove;

Till from the garden and the wild
A fresh association blow,
And year by year the landscape
grow
Familiar to the stranger's child;

As year by year the laborer tills
His wonted glebe, or lops the
glades;

And year by year our memory
fades
From all the circle of the hills.

CII.

We leave the well-beloved place
Where first we gazed upon the
sky ;
The roofs, that heard our earliest
cry,
Will shelter one of stranger race.

We go, but ere we go from home,
As down the garden-walks I
move,
Two spirits of a diverse love
Contend for loving masterdom.

One whispers, 'Here thy boyhood
sung
Long since its matin song, and
heard
The low love-language of the
bird
In native hazels tassel-hung.'

The other answers, 'Yea, but here
Thy feet have stray'd in after
hours
With thy lost friend among the
bowers,
And this hath made them trebly dear.'

These two have striven half the day,
And each prefers his separate
claim,
Poor rivals in a losing game,
That will not yield each other way.

I turn to go: my feet are set
To leave the pleasant fields and
farms;
They mix in one another's arms
To one pure image of regret.

CIII.

On that last night before we went
From out the doors where I was
bred,
I dream'd a vision of the dead,
Which left my after-morn content.

Methought I dwelt within a hall,
And maidens with me: distant
hills
From hidden summits fed with
rills
A river sliding by the wall.

The hall with harp and carol rang.
They sang of what is wise and
good
And graceful. In the centre
stood
A statue veil'd, to which they sang ;

And which, tho' veil'd, was known to
me,
The shape of him I loved, and
love
For ever: then flew in a dove
And brought a summons from the sea :

And when they learnt that I must go
They wept and wail'd, but led the
way
To where a little shallop lay
At anchor in the flood below ;

And on by many a level mead,
And shadowing bluff that made
the banks,
We glided winding under ranks
Of iris, and the golden reed ;

And still as vaster grew the shore
And roll'd the floods in grander
space,
The maidens gather'd strength
and grace
And presence, lordlier than before ;

And I myself, who sat apart
And watch'd them, wax'd in
every limb;
I felt the thews of Anakim,
The pulses of a Titan's heart ;

As one would sing the death of war,
And one would chant the history
Of that great race, which is to be,
And one the shaping of a star ;

Until the forward-creeping tides
Began to foam, and we to draw

From deep to deep, to where we
saw
A great ship lift her shining sides.

The man we loved was there on deck
But thrice as large as man he bent
To greet us. Up the side I went,
And fell in silence on his neck.

Whereat those maidens with one mind
Bewail'd their lot; I did them
wrong:
'We served thee here,' they said,
'so long,
And wilt thou leave us now behind?'

So rapt I was, they could not win
An answer from my lips, but he
Replying, 'Enter likewise ye
And go with us:' they enter'd in.

And while the wind began to sweep
A music out of sheet and shroud,
We steer'd her toward a crimson
cloud
That landlike slept along the deep.

civ.

The time draws near the birth of
Christ;
The moon is hid, the night is still;
A single church below the hill
Is pealing, folded in the mist.

A single peal of bells below,
That wakens at this hour of rest
A single murmur in the breast,
That these are not the bells I know.

Like strangers' voices here they sound
In lands where not a memory
strays,
Nor landmark breathes of other
days,
But all is new unhallow'd ground.

cv.

To-night ungather'd let us leave
This laurel, let this holly stand:
We live within the stranger's
land,
And strangely falls our Christmas-eve.

Our father's dust is left alone
And silent under other snows:
There in due time the woodbine
blows,
The violet comes, but we are gone.

No more shall wayward grief abuse
The genial hour with mask and
mime:
For change of place, like growth
of time,
Has broke the bond of dying use.

Let cares that petty shadows cast,
By which our lives are chiefly
proved,
A little spare the night I loved,
And hold it solemn to the past

But let no footstep beat the floor,
Nor bowl of wassail mantle warm;
For who would keep an ancient
form
Thro' which the spirit breathes no
more?

Be neither song, nor game, nor feast;
Nor harp be touch'd, nor flute be
blown;
No dance, no motion, save alone
What lightens in the lucid east

Of rising worlds by yonder wood.
Long sleeps the summer in the
seed;
Run out your measured arcs, and
lead
The closing cycle rich in good.

cvi

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
The flying cloud, the frosty light:
The year is dying in the night;
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the
snow:
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,
 For those that here we see no
 more;
 Ring out the feud of rich and
 poor,
 Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,
 And ancient forms of party strife;
 Ring in the nobler modes of life,
 With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
 The faithless coldness of the
 times;
 Ring out, ring out my mournful
 rhymes,
 But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and
 blood,
 The civic slander and the spite;
 Ring in the love of truth and right,
 Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease;
 Ring out the narrowing lust of
 gold;
 Ring out the thousand wars of old,
 Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,
 The larger heart, the kindlier
 hand;
 Ring out the darkness of the land,
 Ring in the Christ that is to be

CVII.

It is the day when he was born,
 A bitter day that early sank
 Behind a purple frosty bank
 Of vapor, leaving night forlorn.

The time admits not flowers or leaves
 To deck the banquet. Fiercely
 flies
 The blast of North and East, and
 ice

Makes daggers at the sharpen'd eaves,

And bristles all the brakes and thorns
 To yon hard crescent, as she
 hangs

Above the wood which grides
 and clangs
 Its leafless ribs and iron horns

Together, in the drifts that pass
 To darken on the rolling brine
 That breaks the coast. But fetch
 the wine,
 Arrange the board and brim the glass;

Bring in great logs and let them lie,
 To make a solid core of heat;
 Be cheerful-minded, talk and
 treat
 Of all things ev'n as he were by;

We keep the day. With festal cheer,
 With hooks and music, surely we
 Will drink to him, whate'er he be,
 And sing the songs he loved to hear.

CVIII.

I will not shut me from my kind,
 And, lest I stiffen into stone,
 I will not eat my heart alone,
 Nor feed with sighs a passing wind:

What profit lies in barren faith,
 And vacant yearning, tho' with
 might
 To scale the heaven's highest
 height,
 Or dive below the wells of Death?

What find I in the highest place,
 But mine own phantom chanting
 hymns?
 And on the depths of death there
 swims
 The reflex of a human face.

I'll rather take what fruit may be
 Of sorrow under human skies:
 'Tis held that sorrow makes us
 wise,
 Whatever wisdom sleep with thee.

CIX.

Heart-affluence in discursive talk
 From household fountains never
 dry;

The critic clearness of an eye,
That saw thro' all the Muses' walk ;

Seraphic intellect and force
To seize and throw the doubts of
man ;

Impassion'd logic, which outran
The hearer in its fiery course ;

High nature amorous of the good,
But touch'd with no ascetic gloom ;
And passion pure in snowy bloom
Thro' all the years of April blood ;

A love of freedom rarely felt,
Of freedom in her regal seat
Of England ; not the schoolboy
heat,
The blind hysterics of the Celt ;

And manhood fused with female
grace
In such a sort, the child would
twine
A trustful hand, unask'd, in thine,
And find his comfort in thy face ;

All these have been, and thee mine
eyes
Have look'd on : if they look'd
in vain,
My shame is greater who remain,
Nor let thy wisdom make me wise.

CX.

Thy converse drew us with delight,
The men of rathe and riper years :
The feeble soul, a haunt of fears,
Forgot his weakness in thy sight.

On thee the loyal-hearted hung,
The proud was half disarm'd of
pride,
Nor cared the serpent at thy side
To flicker with his double tongue.

The stern were mild when thou wert
by.
The flippant put himself to school
And heard thee, and the brazen
fool
Was soften'd, and he knew not why ;

While I, thy nearest, sat apart,
And felt thy triumph was as mine ;
And loved them more, that they
were thine,
The graceful tact, the Christian art ;

Nor mine the sweetness or the skill,
But mine the love that will not
tire,
And, born of love, the vague
desire
That spurs an imitative will.

CXI.

The churl in spirit, up or down
Along the scale of ranks, thro' all,
To him who grasps a golden ball,
By blood a king, at heart a clown ;

The churl in spirit, howe'er he veil
His want in forms for fashion's
sake,
Will let his coltish nature break
At seasons thro' the gilded pale :

For who can always act? but he,
To whom a thousand memories
call,
Not being less but more than all
The gentleness he seem'd to be,

Best seem'd the thing he was, and
join'd
Each office of the social hour
To noble manners, as the flower
And native growth of noble mind ;

Nor ever narrowness or spite,
Or villain fancy fleeting by,
Drew in the expression of an eye,
Where God and Nature met in light ;

And thus he bore without abuse
The grand old name of gentle-
man,
Defamed by every charlatan,
And soil'd with all ignoble use.

CXII.

High wisdom holds my wisdom less,
That I, who gaze with temperate
eyes

On glorious insufficiencies,
Set light by narrower perfectness.

But thou, that fillest all the room
Of all my love, art reason why
I seem to cast a careless eye
On souls, the lesser lords of doom.

For what wert thou? some novel
power
Sprang up for ever at a touch,
And hope could never hope too
much,
In watching thee from hour to hour,

Large elements in order brought,
And tracts of calm from tempest
made,
And world-wide fluctuation sway'd
In vassal tides that follow'd thought.

CXIII.

'Tis held that sorrow makes us wise;
Yet how much wisdom sleeps
with thee
Which not alone had guided me,
But served the seasons that may rise;

For can I doubt, who knew thee keen
In intellect, with force and skill
To strive, to fashion, to fulfil—
I doubt not what thou wouldst have
been:

A life in civic action warm,
A soul on highest mission sent,
A potent voice of Parliament,
A pillar steadfast in the storm,

Should licensed boldness gather force,
Becoming, when the time has
birth,

A lever to uplift the earth
And roll it in another course,

With thousand shocks that come and
go,
With agonies, with energies,
With overthrowings, and with
cries,
And undulations to and fro.

CXIV.

Who loves not Knowledge? Who
shall rail
Against her beauty? May she
mix
With men and prosper! Who
shall fix
Her pillars? Let her work prevail.

But on her forehead sits a fire:
She sets her forward countenance
And leaps into the future chance,
Submitting all things to desire.

Half-grown as yet, a child, and vain—
She cannot fight the fear of death.
What is she, cut from love and
faith,
But some wild Pallas from the brain

Of Demons? fiery-hot to burst
All barriers in her onward race
For power. Let her know her
place;
She is the second, not the first.

A higher hand must make her mild,
If all be not in vain; and guide
Her footsteps, moving side by
side
With wisdom, like the younger child:

For she is earthly of the mind,
But Wisdom heavenly of the soul.
O, friend, who camest to thy goal
So early, leaving me behind,

I would the great world grew like
thee,
Who grewest not alone in power
And knowledge, but by year and
hour
In reverence and in charity.

CXV.

Now fades the last long streak of
snow,
Now burgeons every maze of
quick
About the flowering squares, and
thick
By ashen roots the violets blow.

Now rings the woodland loud and
long,
The distance takes a lovelier
hue,
And drown'd in yonder living
blue
The lark becomes a sightless song.

Now dance the lights on lawn and lea,
The flocks are whiter down the
vale,
And milkier every milky sail
On winding stream or distant sea ;

Where now the seamew pipes, or
dives
In yonder greening gleam, and
fly
The happy birds, that change
their sky
To build and brood ; that live their
lives

From land to land ; and in my breast
Spring wakens too ; and my
regret
Becomes an April violet,
And buds and blossoms like the rest.

CXVI.

Is it, then, regret for buried time
That keenlier in sweet April
wakes,
And meets the year, and gives
and takes
The colors of the crescent prime ?

Not all : the songs, the stirring air,
The life re-orient out of dust,
Cry thro' the sense to hearten
trust
In that which made the world so fair.

Not all regret : the face will shine
Upon me, while I muse alone ;
And that dear voice, I once have
known,
Still speak to me of me and mine :

Yet less of sorrow lives in me
For days of happy commune
dead ;

Less yearning for the friendship
fled,
Than some strong bond which is to be.

CXVII.

O days and hours, your work is this
To hold me from my proper
place,
A little while from his embrace,
For fuller gain of after bliss :

That out of distance might ensue
Desire of nearness doubly sweet ;
And unto meeting when we meet,
Delight a hundredfold accrue,

For every grain of sand that runs,
And every span of shade that
steals,
And every kiss of toothed wheels,
And all the courses of the suns.

CXVIII.

Contemplate all this work of Time,
The giant laboring in his youth ;
Nor dream of human love and
truth,
As dying Nature's earth and lime ;

But trust that those we call the dead
Are breatherers of an ampler day
For ever nobler ends. They say,
The solid earth whereon we tread

In tracts of fluent heat began,
And grew to seeming-random
forms,
The seeming prey of cyclic storms,
Till at the last arose the man ;

Who throve and branch'd from clime
to clime,
The herald of a higher race,
And of himself in higher place,
If so he type this work of time

Within himself, from more to more ;
Or, crown'd with attributes of
woe
Like glories, move his course,
and show
That life is not as idle ore,

But iron dug from central gloom,
And heated hot with burning
fears,
And dipt in baths of hissing tears,
And batter'd with the shocks of doom

To shape and use. Arise and fly
The reeling Faun, the sensual
feast;
Move upward, working out the
beast,
And let the ape and tiger die.

CXIX.

Doors, where my heart was used to
heat
So quickly, not as one that weeps
I come once more; the city
sleeps;
I smell the meadow in the street;

I hear a chirp of birds; I see
Betwixt the black fronts long-
withdrawn
A light-blue lane of early dawn,
And think of early days and thee,

And bless thee, for thy lips are bland,
And bright the friendship of thine
eye;
And in my thoughts with scarce
a sigh

I take the pressure of thine hand.

CXX.

I trust I have not wasted breath:
I think we are not wholly brain,
Magnetic mockeries; not in vain,
Like Paul with beasts, I fought with
Death;

Not only cunning casts in clay:
Let Science prove we are, and
then
What matters Science unto men,
At least to me? I would not stay.

Let him, the wiser man who springs
Hereafter, up from childhood
shape
His action like the greater ape,
But I was *born* to other things.

CXXI.

Sad Hesper o'er the buried sun
And ready, thou, to die with him,
Thou watchest all things ever dim
And dimmer, and a glory done.

The team is loosen'd from the wain,
The boat is drawn upon the
shore;
Thou listenest to the closing door,
And life is darken'd in the brain.

Bright Phosphor, fresher for the night,
By thee the world's great work is
heard
Beginning, and the wakeful bird;
Behind thee comes the greater light:

The market boat is on the stream,
And voices hail it from the brink;
Thou hear'st the village hammer
clink,
And see'st the moving of the team.

Sweet Hesper-Phosphor, double name
For what is one, the first, the last,
Thou, like my present and my
past,
Thy place is changed; thou art the
same.

CXXII.

Oh, wast thou with me, dearest, then,
While I rose up against my doom,
And yearn'd to burst the folded
gloom,
To bare the eternal Heavens again,

To feel once more, in placid awe,
The strong imagination roll
A sphere of stars about my soul,
In all her motion one with law;

If thou wert with me, and the grave
Divide us not, be with me now,
And enter in at breast and brow,
Till all my blood, a fuller wave,

Be quicken'd with a livelier breath,
And like an inconsiderate boy,
As in the former flash of joy,
I slip the thoughts of life and death;

And all the breeze of Fancy blows,
And every dew-drop paints a bow,
The wizard lightnings deeply glow,
And every thought breaks out a rose.

CXXIII.

There rolls the deep where grew the
tree.
O earth, what changes hast thou
seen!
There where the long street roars,
hath been
The stillness of the central sea.

The hills are shadows, and they flow
From form to form, and nothing
stands;
They melt like mist, the solid
lands,
Like clouds they shape themselves
and go.

But in my spirit will I dwell,
And dream my dream, and hold
it true;
For tho' my lips may breathe
adieu,
I cannot think the thing farewell.

CXXIV.

That which we dare invoke to bless;
Our dearest faith; our ghastliest
doubt;
He, They, One, All; within, with-
out;
The Power in darkness whom we
guess;

I found Him not in world or sun,
Or eagle's wing, or insect's eye;
Nor thro' the questions men may
try,

The petty cobwebs we have spun:

If e'er when faith had fall'n asleep,
I heard a voice 'believe no more'
And heard an ever-breaking shore
That tumbled in the Godless deep;

A warmth within the breast would
melt
The freezing reason's colder part,

And like a man in wrath the heart
Stood up and answer'd 'I have felt.'

No, like a child in doubt and fear:
But that blind clamor made me
wise;
Then was I as a child that cries,
But, crying, knows his father near;

And what I am beheld again
What is, and no man understands;
And out of darkness came the
hands
That reach thro' nature, moulding men.

CXXV.

Whatever I have said or sung,
Some bitter notes my heart would
give,
Yea, tho' there often seem'd to
live
A contradiction on the tongue,

Yet Hope had never lost her youth:
She did but look through dimmer
eyes;
Or Love but play'd with gracious
lies,
Because he felt so fix'd in truth:

And if the song were full of care,
He breathed the spirit of the song;
And if the words were sweet and
strong
He set his royal signet there;

Abiding with me till I sail
To seek thee on the mystic deeps,
And this electric force, that keeps
A thousand pulses dancing, fail.

CXXVI.

Love is and was my Lord and King,
And in his presence I attend
To hear the tidings of my friend,
Which every hour his couriers bring.

Love is and was my King and Lord,
And will be, tho' as yet I keep
Within his court on earth, and
sleep
Encompass'd by his faithful guard,

And hear at times a sentinel
 Who moves about from place to
 place,
 And whispers to the worlds of
 space,
 In the deep night, that all is well.

CXXVII.

And all is well, tho' faith and form
 Be sunder'd in the night of fear;
 Well roars the storm to those
 that hear
 A deeper voice across the storm,

Proclaiming social truth shall spread,
 And justice, ev'n tho' thrice again
 The red fool-fury of the Seine
 Should pile her barricades with dead.

But ill for him that wears a crown,
 And him, the lazar, in his rags :
 They tremble, the sustaining
 crags ;
 The spires of ice are toppled down,

And molten up, and roar in flood;
 The fortress crashes from on high,
 The brute earth lightens to the
 sky,
 And the great Æon sinks in blood,

And compass'd by the fires of Hell ;
 While thou, dear spirit, happy
 star,
 O'erlook'st the tumult from afar,
 And smilest, knowing all is well.

CXXVIII.

The love that rose on stronger wings,
 Unpalsied when he met with
 Death,
 Is comrade of the lesser faith
 That sees the course of human things.

No doubt vast eddies in the flood
 Of onward time shall yet be made,
 And throned races may degrade ;
 Yet O ye mysteries of good,

Wild Hours that fly with Hope and
 Fear,
 If all your office had to do

With old results that look like
 new ;
 If this were all your mission here,

To draw, to sheathe a useless sword,
 To fool the crowd with glorious
 lies,
 To cleave a creed in sects and
 cries,
 To change the bearing of a word,

To shift an arbitrary power,
 To cramp the student at his desk,
 To make old bareness picturesque
 And tuft with grass a feudal tower ;

Why then my scorn might well descend
 On you and yours. I see in part
 That all, as in some piece of art,
 Is toil coöperant to an end.

CXXIX.

Dear friend, far off, my lost desire,
 So far, so near in woe and weal ;
 O loved the most, when most I
 feel
 There is a lower and a higher ;

Known and unknown ; human, divine ;
 Sweet human hand and lips and
 eye ;
 Dear heavenly friend that canst
 not die,
 Mine, mine, for ever, ever mine ;

Strange friend, past, present, and to
 be ;
 Loved deeplier, darklier under-
 stood ;
 Behold, I dream a dream of good,
 And mingle all the world with thee.

CXXX.

Thy voice is on the rolling air ;
 I hear thee where the waters run ;
 Thou standest in the rising sun,
 And in the setting thou art fair.

What art thou then ? I cannot guess ;
 But tho' I seem in star and flower
 To feel thee some diffusive power,
 I do not therefore love thee less :

My love involves the love before;
My love is vaster passion now;
Tho' mix'd with God and Nature
thou,
I seem to love thee more and more.

Far off thou art, but ever nigh;
I have thee still, and I rejoice;
I prosper, circled with thy voice;
I shall not lose thee tho' I die.

CCXXI.

O living will that shalt endure
When all that seems shall suffer
shock,
Rise in the spiritual rock,
Flow thro' our deeds and make them
pure,

That we may lift from out of dust
A voice as unto him that hears,
A cry above the conquer'd years
To one that with us works, and trust,

With faith that comes of self-control,
The truths that never can be
proved
Until we close with all we loved,
And all we flow from, soul in soul.

O true and tried, so well and long,
Demand not thou a marriage lay;
In that it is thy marriage day
Is music more than any song.

Nor have I felt so much of bliss
Since first he told me that he
loved
A daughter of our house; nor
proved
Since that dark day a day like this;

Tho' I since then have number'd o'er
Some thrice three years: they
went and came,
Remade the blood and changed
the frame,
And yet is love not less, but more;

No longer caring to embalm
In dying songs a dead regret,

But like a statue solid-set,
And moulded in colossal calm.

Regret is dead, but love is more
Than in the summers that are
flown,
For I myself with these have
grown
To something greater than before;

Which makes appear the songs I
made
As echoes out of weaker times,
As half but idle brawling rhymes,
The sport of random sun and shade.

But where is she, the bridal flower,
That must be made a wife ere
noon?
She enters, glowing like the moon
Of Eden on its bridal bower:

On me she bends her blissful eyes
And then on thee; they meet thy
look
And brighten like the star that
shook
Betwixt the palms of paradise.

O when her life was yet in bud,
He too foretold the perfect rose.
For thee she grew, for thee she
grows
For ever, and as fair as good.

And thou art worthy; full of power;
As gentle; liberal-minded, great,
Consistent; wearing all that
weight
Of learning lightly like a flower.

But now set out: the noon is near,
And I must give away the bride;
She fears not, or with thee beside
And me behind her, will not fear.

For I that danced her on my knee,
That watch'd her on her nurse's
arm,
That shielded all her life from
harm
At last must part with her to thee;

Now waiting to be made a wife,
 Her feet, my darling, on the
 dead;
 Their pensive tablets round her
 head,
 And the most living words of life

Breathed in her ear. The ring is on,
 The 'wilt thou' answer'd, and
 again
 The 'wilt thou' ask'd, till out of
 twain
 Her sweet 'I will' has made you one.

Now sign your names, which shall be
 read,
 Mute symbols of a joyful morn,
 By village eyes as yet unborn;
 The names are sign'd, and overhead

Begins the clash and clang that tells
 The joy to every wandering
 breeze;
 The blind wall rocks, and on the
 trees
 The dead leaf trembles to the bells.

O happy hour, and happier hours
 Await them. Many a merry face
 Salutes them—maidens of the
 place,
 That pelt us in the porch with
 flowers.

O happy hour, behold the bride
 With him to whom her hand I
 gave.
 They leave the porch, they pass
 the grave
 That has to-day its sunny side.

To-day the grave is bright for me,
 For them the light of life in-
 creased,
 Who stayed to share the morning
 fei st,
 Who rests to-night beside the sea.

Let all my genial spirits advance
 To meet and greet a whiter sun;
 My drooping memory will not
 shun
 The foaming grape of eastern France.

It circles round, and fancy plays,
 And hearts are warm'd and faces
 bloom,
 As drinking health to bride and
 groom
 We wish them store of happy days.

Nor count me all to blame if I
 Conjecture of a stiller guest,
 Perchance, perchance, among the
 rest,
 And, tho' in silence, wishing joy.

But they must go, the time draws on,
 And those white-favor'd horses
 wait;
 They rise, but linger; it is late;
 Farewell, we kiss, and they are gone.

A shade falls on us like the dark
 From little cloudlets on the grass,
 But sweeps away as out we pass
 To range the woods, to roam the park,

Discussing how their courtship grew,
 And talk of others that are wed,
 And how she look'd, and what he
 said,
 And back we come at fall of dew.

Again the feast, the speech, the glee,
 The shade of passing thought,
 the wealth
 Of words and wit, the double
 health,
 The crowning cup, the three-times-
 three,

And last the dance ;—till I retire :
 Dumb is that tower which spake
 so loud,
 And high in heaven the stream-
 ing cloud,
 And on the downs a rising fire :

And rise, O moon, from yonder down,
 Till over down and over dale
 All night the shining vapor sail
 And pass the silent-lighted town,

The white-faced halls, the glancing
 rills,
 And catch at every mountain head,

And o'er the friths that branch
and spread
Their sleeping silver thro' the hills ;

And touch . . . in shade the bridal
doors,
With tender gloom the roof, the
wall ;
And breaking let the splendour
fall
To spangle all the happy shores

By which they rest, and ocean sounds,
And, star and system rolling
past,
A soul shall draw from out the
vast
And strike his being into bounds,

And, moved thro' life of lower phase,
Result in man, be born and think,
And act and love, a closer link
Betwixt us and the crowning race

Of those that, eye to eye, shall look
On knowledge ; under whose
command
Is Earth and Earth's, and in their
hand
Is Nature like an open book ;

No longer half-akin to brute,
For all we thought and loved and
did,
And hoped, and suffer'd, is but
seed
Of what in them is flower and fruit ;

Whereof the man, that with me trod
This planet, was a noble type
Appearing ere the times were ripe,
That friend of mine who lives in God,

That God, which ever lives and loves,
One God, one law, one element,
And one far-off divine event,
To which the whole creation moves.

IDYLLS OF THE KING.

IN TWELVE BOOKS.

'Flos Regum Arthurus.'—JOSEPH OF EXETER.

DEDICATION.

THESE to His Memory—since he
held them dear,
Perchance as finding there uncon-
sciously
Some image of himself—I dedicate,
I dedicate, I consecrate with tears—
These Idylls.

And indeed He seems to me
Scarce other than my king's ideal
knight,
'Who revered his conscience as
his king ;
Whose glory was, redressing human
wrong ;
Who spake no slander, no, nor
listen'd to it ;
Who loved one only and who gave
to her—
Her—over all whose realms to their
last isle,

Commingled with the gloom of im-
minent war,
The shadow of His loss drew like
eclipse,
Darkening the world. We have lost
him : he is gone :
We know him now : all narrow jeal-
ousies
Are silent ; and we see him as he
moved,
How modest, kindly, all-accomplish'd,
wise,
With what sublime repression of him-
self.
And in what limits, and how tenderly ;
Not swaying to this faction or to
that ;
Not making his high place the lawless
perch
Of wing'd ambitions, nor a vantage-
ground

For pleasure; but thro' all this tract
 of years
 Wearing the white flower of a blame-
 less life,
 Before a thousand peering littlenesses,
 In that fierce light which beats upon a
 throne,
 And blackens every blot: for where
 is he,
 Who dares foreshadow for an only son
 A lovelier life, a more unstain'd,
 than his?
 Or how should England dreaming of
his sons
 Hope more for these than some in-
 heritance
 Of such a life, a heart, a mind as thine,
 Thou noble Father of her Kings to be,
 Laborious for her people and her
 poor—
 Voice in the rich dawn of an ampler
 day—
 Far-sighted summoner of War and
 Waste
 To fruitful strifes and rivalries of
 peace—
 Sweet nature gilded by the gracious
 gleam
 Of letters, dear to Science, dear to Art,

Dear to thy land and ours, a Prince
 indeed,
 Beyond all titles, and a household
 name,
 Hereafter, thro' all times, Albert the
 Good.

Break not, O woman's-heart, but
 still endure;
 Break not, for thou art Royal, but
 endure,
 Remen'ering all the beauty of that
 star
 Which shone so close beside Thee
 that ye made
 One light together, but has past and
 leaves
 The Crown a lonely splendor.
 May all love,
 His love, unseen but felt, o'ershadow
 Thee,
 The love of all Thy sons encompass
 Thee,
 The love of all Thy daughters cherish
 Thee,
 The love of all Thy people comfort
 Thee,
 Till God's love set Thee at his side
 again!

THE COMING OF ARTHUR.

LEODOGRAN, the King of Cameliard,
 Had one fair daughter, and none other
 child;
 And she was fairest of all flesh on
 earth,
 Guinevere, and in her his one delight.

For many a petty king ere Arthur
 came
 Ruled in this isle, and ever waging
 war
 Each upon other, wasted all the land;
 And still from time to time the heathen
 host
 Swarm'd overseas, and harried what
 was left.
 And so there grew great tracts of
 wilderness,
 Wherein the beast was ever more and
 more,

But man was less and less, till Arthur
 came.
 For first Aurelius lived and fought
 and died,
 And after him King Uther fought and
 died,
 But either fail'd to make the kingdom
 one.
 And after these King Arthur for a space,
 And thro' the puissance of his Table
 Round,
 Drew all their petty princedom under
 him,
 Their king and head, and made a
 realm, and reign'd.

And thus the land of Cameliard was
 waste,
 Thick with wet woods, and many a
 beast therein,

And none or few to scare or chase the
beast;
So that wild dog, and wolf and boar
and bear
Came night and day, and rooted in
the fields,
And wallow'd in the gardens of the
King.
And ever and anon the wolf would steal
The children and devour, but now
and then,
Her own brood lost or dead, lent her
fierce teat
To human sucklings; and the chil-
dren, housed
In her foul den, there at their meat
would growl,
And mock their foster-mother on four
feet,
Till, straighten'd, they grew up to wolf-
like men,
Worse than the wolves. And King
Leodogran
Groan'd for the Roman legions here
again,
And Cæsar's eagle: then his brother
king,
'Urien, assail'd him: last a heathen
horde,
Reddening the sun with smoke and
earth with blood,
And on the spike that split the
mother's heart
Spitting the child, brake on him, till,
amazed,
He knew not whither he should turn
for aid.

But—for he heard of Arthur newly
crown'd,
Tho' not without an uproar made by
those
Who cried, 'He is not Uther's son'—
the King
Sent to him, saying, 'Arise, and help
us thou!
For here between the man and beast
we die.'

And Arthur yet had done no deed
of arms,
But heard the call, and came: and
Guinevere

Stood by the castle walls to watch
him pass;
But since he neither wore on helm or
shield
The golden symbol of his kinglihood,
But rode a simple knight among his
knights,
And many of these in richer arms than
he,
She saw him not, or mark'd not, if
she saw,
One among many, tho' his face was
bare.
But Arthur, looking downward as he
past,
Felt the light of her eyes into his life
Smite on the sudden, yet rode on, and
pitch'd
His tents beside the forest. Then he
drave
The heathen; after, slew the beast,
and fell'd
The forest, letting in the sun, and made
Broad pathways for the hunter and
the knight
And so return'd.

For while he linger'd there,
A doubt that ever smoulder'd in the
hearts
Of those great Lords and Barons of
his realm
Flash'd forth and into war: for most
of these,
Colleaguings with a score of petty kings,
Made head against him, crying, 'Who
is he
That he should rule us? who hath
proven him
King Uther's son? for lo! we look at
him,
And find nor face nor bearing, limbs
nor voice,
Are like to those of Uther whom we
knew.
This is the son of Gorloïs, not the
King;
This is the son of Anton, not the King.'

And Arthur, passing thence to
battle, felt
Travail, and throes and agonies of the
life,

Desiring to be join'd with Guinevere;
And thinking as he rode, 'Her father
said

That there between the man and beast
they die.

Shall I not lift her from this land of
beasts

Up to my throne, and side by side
with me?

What happiness to reign a lonely king,

Vext—O ye stars that shudder over
me,

O earth that soundest hollow under
me,

Vext with waste dreams? for saving I
be join'd

To her that is the fairest under heaven,
I seem as nothing in the mighty world,
And cannot will my will, nor work my
work

Wholly, nor make myself in mine
own realm

Victor and lord. But were I join'd
with her,

Then might we live together as one
life,

And reigning with one will in every-
thing

Have power on this dark land to
lighten it,

And power on this dead world to
make it live.'

Thereafter—as he speaks who tells
the tale—

When Arthur reach'd a field-of-battle
bright

With pitch'd pavilions of his foe, the
world

Was all so clear about him, that he
saw

The smallest rock far on the faintest
hill,

And even in high day the morning
star.

So when the King had set his banner
broad,

At once from either side, with trump-
et-blast,

And shouts, and clarions shrilling
unto blood,

The long-lanced battle let their horses
run.

And now the Barons and the kings
prevail'd,

And now the King, as here and there
that war

Went swaying; but the Powers who
walk the world

Made lightnings and great thunders
over him,

And dazed all eyes, till Arthur by
main might,

And mightier of his hands with every
blow,

And leading all his knighthood threw
the kings

Carados, Urien, Cradlemont of
Wales,

Claudias, and Clariance of Northum-
berland,

The King Brandagoras of Latangor,
With Anguisant of Erin, Morgan-
ore,

And Lot of Orkney. Then, before a
voice

As dreadful as the shout of one who
sees

To one who sins, and deems himself
alone

And all the world asleep, they swerved.
and brake

Flying, and Arthur call'd to stay the
brands

That hack'd among the flyers, 'Ho!
they yield!'

So like a painted battle the war stood
Silenced, the living quiet as the dead,

And in the heart of Arthur joy was
lord.

He laugh'd upon his warrior whom he
loved

And honor'd most. 'Thou dost not
doubt me King,

So well thine arm hath wrought for
me to-day.'

'Sir and my liege,' he cried, 'the fire
of God

Descends upon thee in the battle-
field:

I know thee for my King!' Whereat
the two,

For each had ward'd either in the
fight,

Swore on the field of death a death-
less love.

And Arthur said, 'Man's word is
God in man :
Let chance what will, I trust thee to
the death.'

Then quickly from the foughen
field he sent
Ulfus, and Brastias, and Bedivere,
His new-made knights, to King
Leodogran,
Saying, 'If I in aught have served
thee well,
Give me thy daughter Guinevere to
wife.'

Whom when he heard, Leodogran
in heart
Debating—'How should I that am a
king,
However much he help me at my need,
Give my one daughter saving to a king,
And a king's son?'—lifted his voice,
and call'd
A hoary man, his chamberlain, to
whom
He trusted all things, and of him
required
His counsel: 'Knowest thou aught
of Arthur's birth?'

Then spake the hoary chamberlain
and said,
'Sir King, there be but two old men
that know:
And each is twice as old as I; and
one
Is Merlin, the wise man that ever
served
King Uther thro' his magic art; and
one
Is Merlin's master (so they call him)
Bleys,
Who taught him magic; but the
scholar ran
Before the master, and so far, that
Bleys,
Laid magic by, and sat him down,
and wrote
All things and whatsoever Merlin did
In one great annal-book, where after
years
Will learn the secret of our Arthur's
birth.'

To whom the King Leodogran
replied,
'O friend, had I been holpen half as
well
By this King Arthur as by thee to-
day,
Then beast and man had had their
share of me :
But summon here before us yet once
more
Ulfus, and Brastias, and Bedivere.'

Then, when they came before him,
the King said,
'I have seen the cuckoo chased by
lesser fowl,
And reason in the chase: but where-
fore now
Do these your lords stir up the heat
of war,
Some calling Arthur born of Gorlois,
Others of Anton? Tell me, ye your-
selves,
Hold ye this Arthur for King Uther's
son?'

And Ulfus and Brastias answer'd,
'Ay.'
Then Bedivere, the first of all his
knights
Knighted by Arthur at his crowning,
spake—
For bold in heart and act and word
was he,
Whenever slander breathed against
the King—

'Sir, there be many rumors on this
head:
For there be those who hate him in
their hearts,
Call him baseborn, and since his ways
are sweet,
And theirs are bestial, hold him less
than man:
And there be those who deem him
more than man,
And dream he dropt from heaven: but
my belief
In all this matter—so ye care to
learn—
Sir, for ye know that in King Uther's
time

The prince and warrior Gorlois, he
 that held
 Tintagil castle by the Cornish sea,
 Was wedded with a winsome wife,
 Ygerne:
 And daughters had she borne him,—
 one whereof,
 Lot's wife, the Queen of Orkney,
 Bellicent,
 Hath ever like a loyal sister cleaved
 To Arthur,—but a son she had not
 borne.
 And Uther cast upon her eyes of love:
 But she, a stainless wife to Gorlois,
 So loathed the bright dishonor of his
 love,
 That Gorlois and King Uther went to
 war:
 And overthrown was Gorlois and
 slain.
 Then Uther in his wrath and heat
 besieged
 Ygerne within Tintagil, where her
 men,
 Seeing the mighty swarm about their
 walls,
 Left her and fled, and Uther enter'd
 in,
 And there was none to call to but
 himself.
 So, compass'd by the power of the
 King,
 Enforced she was to wed him in her
 tears,
 And with a shameful swiftness: after-
 ward,
 Not many moons, King Uther died
 himself,
 Moaning and wailing for an heir to
 rule
 After him, lest the realm should go to
 wrack.
 And that same night, the night of the
 new year,
 By reason of the bitterness and grief
 That vexed his mother, all before his
 time
 Was Arthur born, and all as soon as
 born
 Deliver'd at a secret postern-gate
 To Merlin, to be holden far apart
 Until his hour should come; because
 the lords

Of that fierce day were as the lords of
 this,
 Wild beasts, and surely would have
 torn the child
 Piecemeal among them, had they
 known; for each
 But sought to rule for his own self
 and hand,
 And many hated Uther for the sake
 Of Gorlois. Wherefore Merlin took
 the child,
 And gave him to Sir Anton, an old
 knight
 And ancient friend of Uther; and his
 wife
 Nursed the young prince, and rear'd
 him with her own;
 And no man knew. And ever since
 the lords
 Have foughten like wild beasts among
 themselves,
 So that the realm has gone to wrack:
 but now,
 This year, when Merlin (for his hour
 had come)
 Brought Arthur forth, and set him in
 the hall,
 Proclaiming, "Here is Uther's heir,
 your king."
 A hundred voices cried, "Away with
 him!
 No kings of ours! a son of Gorlois
 he,
 Or else the child of Anton, and no
 king,
 Or else baseborn." Yet Merlin thro'
 his craft,
 And while the people clamor'd for a
 king,
 Had Arthur crown'd; but after, the
 great lords
 Banded, and so brake out in open war.

Then while the King debated with
 himself
 If Arthur were the child of shameful-
 ness,
 Or born the son of Gorlois, after
 death,
 Or Uther's son, and born before his
 time,
 Or whether there were truth in any
 thing

Said by these three, there came to
Cameliard,
With Gawain and young Modred, her
two sons,
Lot's wife, the Queen of Orkney,
Bellicent;
Whom as he could, not as he would,
the King
Made feast for, saying, as they sat at
meat,

'A doubtful throne is ice on summer seas.

Ye come from Arthur's court. Victor
his men

Report him! Yea, but ye—think ye
this king—

So many those that hate him, and so
strong,

So few his knights, however brave
they be—

Hath body enow to hold his foemen
down?'

'O King,' she cried, 'and I will tell
thee: few,

Few, but all brave, all of one mind
with him;

For I was near him when the savage
yells

Of Uther's peerage died, and Arthur
sat

Crown'd on the dais, and his warriors
cried,

"Be thou the king, and we will work
thy will

Who love thee." Then the King in
low deep tones,

And simple words of great authority,
Bound them by so strait vows to his
own self,

That when they rose, knighted from
kneeling, some

Were pale as at the passing of a ghost,
Some flush'd, and others dazed, as one
who wakes

Half-blinded at the coming of a light.

'But when he spake and cheer'd his
Table Round

With large, divine, and comfortable
words,

Beyond my tongue to tell thee—I
beheld

From eye to eye thro' all their Order
flash

A momentary likeness of the King:
And ere it left their faces, thro' the
cross

And those around it and the Crucified,
Down from the casement over Arthur,
smote

Flame-color, vert and azure, in three
rays.

One falling upon each of three fair
queens,

Who stood in silence near his throne,
the friends

Of Arthur, gazing on him, tall, with
bright

Sweet faces, who will help him at his
need.

'And there I saw mage Merlin,
whose vast wit

And hundred winters are but as the
hands

Of loyal vassals toiling for their liege.

'And near him stood the Lady of
the Lake,

Who knows a subtler magic than his
own—

Clothed in white samite, mystic, won-
derful.

She gave the King his huge cross-
bilted sword,

Whereby to drive the heathen out:
a mist

Of incense curl'd about her, and her
face

Wellnigh was hidden in the minster
gloom;

But there was heard among the holy
hymns

A voice as of the waters, for she
dwells

Down in a deep; calm, whatsoever
storms

May sick the world, and when the
surface rolls,

Hath power to walk the waters like
our Lord.

'There likewise I beheld Excalibur
Before him at his crowning borne, the
sword

That rose from out the bosom of the lake,
 And Arthur row'd across and took it—rich
 With jewels, elfin Urim, on the hilt,
 Bewildering heart and eye—the blade so bright
 That men are blinded by it—on one side,
 Graven in the oldest tongue of all this world,
 "Take me," but turn the blade and ye shall see,
 And written in the speech ye speak yourself,
 "Cast me away!" And sad was Arthur's face
 Taking it, but old Merlin counsell'd him,
 "Take thou and strike! the time to cast away
 Is yet far-off." So this great brand the king
 Took, and by this will beat his foe-men down.'

Thereat Leodogran rejoiced, but thought
 To sift his doubtings to the last, and ask'd,
 Fixing full eyes of question on her face,
 'The swallow and the swift are near akin,
 But thou art closer to this noble prince,
 Being his own dear sister;' and she said,
 'Daughter of Gorlois and Ygerne am I;
 'And therefore Arthur's sister?' ask'd the King.
 She answer'd, 'These be secret things,' and sign'd
 To those two sons to pass, and let them be.
 And Gawain went, and breaking into song
 Sprang out, and follow'd by his flying hair
 Ran like a colt, and leapt at all he saw:
 But Modred laid his ear beside the doors,

And there half-heard; the same that afterward
 Struck for the throne, and striking found his doom.

And then the Queen made answer,
 'What know I?
 For dark my mother was in eyes and hair,
 And dark in hair and eyes am I; and dark
 Was Gorlois, yea and dark was Uther too,
 Wellnigh to blackness; but this King is fair
 Beyond the race of Britons and of men.
 Moreover, always in my mind I hear
 A cry from out the dawning of my life,
 A mother weeping, and I hear her say,
 "O that ye had some brother, pretty one,
 To guard thee on the rough ways of the world."

'Ay,' said the King, 'and hear ye such a cry?
 But when did Arthur chance upon thee first?'

'O King!' she cried, 'and I will tell thee true:
 He found me first when yet a little maid:
 Beaten I had been for a little fault
 Whereof I was not guilty; and out I ran
 And flung myself down on a bank of heath,
 And hated this fair world and all therein,
 And wept, and wish'd that I were dead; and he—
 I know not whether of himself he came,
 Or brought by Merlin, who, they say, can walk
 Unseen at pleasure—he was at my side,
 And spake sweet words, and comforted my heart,

And dried my tears, being a child
with me.
And many a time he came, and ever-
more
As I grew greater grew with me; and
sad
At times he seem'd, and sad with him
was I,
Stern too at times, and then I loved
him not,
But sweet again, and then I loved
him well.
And now of late I see him less and
less,
But those first days had golden hours
for me,
For then I surely thought he would be
king.

‘But let me tell thee now another
tale:
For Bileys, our Merlin’s master, as
they say,
Died but of late, and sent his cry to
me,
To hear him speak before he left his
life.
Shrunk like a fairy changeling lay the
mage;
And when I enter’d told me that him-
self
And Merlin ever served about the
King,
Uther, before he died; and on the
night
When Uther in Tintagil past away
Moaning and wailing for an heir, the
two
Left the still King, and passing forth
to breathe,
Then from the castle gateway by the
chasm
Descending thro’ the dismal night—a
night
In which the bounds of heaven and
earth were lost—
Beheld, so high upon the dreary deeps
It seem’d in heaven, a ship, the shape
thereof
A dragon wing’d, and all from stem
to stern
Bright with a shining people on the
decks,

And gone as soon as seen. And then
the two
Dropt to the cove, and watch’d the
great sea fall,
Wave after wave, each mightier than
the last,
Till last, a ninth one, gathering half
the deep
And full of voices, slowly rose and
plunged
Roaring, and all the wave was in a
flame:
And down the wave and in the flame
was borne
A naked babe, and rode to Merlin’s
feet,
Who stooped and caught the babe, and
cried “The King!
Here is an heir for Uther!” And the
fringe
Of that great breaker, sweeping up
the strand,
Lash’d at the wizard as he spake the
word,
And all at once all round him rose in
fire,
So that the child and he were clothed
in fire.
And presently thereafter follow’d calm,
Free sky and stars: “And this same
child,” he said,
“Is he who reigns; nor could I part
in peace
Till this were told.” And saying this
the seer
Went thro’ the strait and dreadful pass
of death,
Not ever to be question’d any more
Save on the further side; but when I
met
Merlin, and ask’d him if these things
were truth—
The shining dragon and the naked
child
Descending in the glory of the seas—
He laugh’d as is his wont, and an-
swer’d me
In riddling triplets of old time, and
said:

“Rain, rain, and sun! a rainbow
in the sky!
A young man will be wiser by and by;

An old man's wit may wander ere he die.

Rain, rain, and sun! a rainbow on the lea!

And truth is this to me, and that to thee;

And truth or clothed or naked let it be.

Rain, sun, and rain! and the free blossom blows:

Sun, rain, and sun! and where is he who knows?

From the great deep to the great deep he goes."

'So Merlin riddling anger'd me; but thou

Fear not to give this King thine only child,

Guinevere: so great bards of him will sing

Hereafter; and dark sayings from of old

Ranging and ringing thro' the minds of men,

And echo'd by old folk beside their fires For comfort after their wage-work is done,

Speak of the King; and Merlin in our time

Hath spoken also, not in jest, and sworn

Tho' men may wound him that he will not die,

But pass, again to come; and then or now

Utterly smite the heathen underfoot,

Till these and all men hail him for their king.'

She spake and King Leodogran rejoiced.

But musing 'Shall I answer yea or nay?'

Doubted, and drowsed, nodded and slept, and saw,

Dreaming, a slope of land that ever grew,

Field after field, up to a height, the peak

Haze-hidden, and thereon a phantom king,

Now looming, and now lost; and on the slope

The sword rose, the hind fell, the herd was driven,

Fire glimpsed; and all the land from roof and rick,

In drifts of smoke before a rolling wind,

Stream'd to the peak, and mingled with the haze

And made it thicker; while the phantom king

Sent out at times a voice; and here or there

Stood one who pointed toward the voice, the rest

Slew on and burnt, crying, 'No king of ours,

No son of Uther, and no king of ours;'

Till with a wink his dream was changed, the haze

Descended, and the solid earth became As nothing, but the King stood out in heaven,

Crown'd. And Leodogran awoke, and sent

Ulfius, and Brastias and Bedivere,

Back to the court of Arthur answering yea.

Then Arthur charged his warrior whom he loved

And honor'd most, Sir Lancelot, to ride forth

And bring the Queen;—and watch'd him from the gates:

And Lancelot past away among the flowers,

(For then was latter April) and return'd

Among the flowers, in May, with Guinevere.

To whom arrived, by Dubric the high saint,

Chief of the church in Britain, and before

The stateliest of her altar-shrines, the King

That morn was married, while in stainless white,

The fair beginners of a nobler time,

And glorying in their vows and him, his knights

Stood round him, and rejoicing in his joy.



"THEY PUSH'D US, DOWN THE STEPS, AND THRO' THE COURT,"— *Page 62.*



Far shone the fields of May thro' open
door,
The sacred altar blossom'd white with
May,
The Sun of May descended on their
King,
They gazed on all earth's beauty in
their Queen,
Roll'd incense, and there past along
the hymns
A voice as of the waters, while the two
Sware at the shrine of Christ a death-
less love :
And Arthur said, ' Behold, thy doom is
mine.
Let chance what will, I love thee to
the death !'
To whom the Queen replied with
drooping eyes,
' King and my lord, I love thee to the
death !'
And holy Dubric spread his hands and
spake,
' Reign ye, and live and love, and make
the world
Other, and may thy Queen be one with
thee,
And all this Order of thy Table Round
Fulfil the boundless purpose of their
King !'

So Dubric said ; but when they left
the shrine
Great Lords from Rome before the
portal stood,
In scornful stillness gazing as they
past ;
Then while they paced a city all on
fire
With sun and cloth of gold, the trum-
pets blew,
And Arthur's knighthood sang before
the King :—

' Blow trumpet, for the world is
white with May ;
Blow trumpet, the long night hath
roll'd away !
Blow thro' the living world—" Let the
King reign."

' Shall Rome or Heathen rule in
Arthur's realm ?

Flash brand and lance, fall battleaxe
upon helm,
Fall battleaxe, and flash brand ! Let
the King reign.

' Strike for the King and live ! his
knights have heard
That God hath told the King a secret
word.
Fall battleaxe, and flash brand ! Let
the King reign.

' Blow trumpet ! he will lift us from
the dust.
Blow trumpet ! live the strength and
die the lust !
Clang battleaxe, and clash brand !
Let the King reign.

' Strike for the King and die ! and
if thou diest,
The King is King, and ever wills the
highest.
Clang battleaxe, and clash brand !
Let the King reign.

' Blow, for our Sun is mighty in his
May !
Blow, for our Sun is mightier day by
day !
Clang battleaxe, and clash brand !
Let the King reign.

' The King will follow Christ, and
we the King
In whom high God hath breathed a
secret thing.
Fall battleaxe, and flash brand ! Let
the King reign.'

So sang the knighthood, moving to
their hall.
There at the banquet those great
Lords from Rome,
The slowly-fading mistress of the
world,
Strode in, and claim'd their tribute as
of yore.
But Arthur spake, ' Behold, for these
have sworn
To wage my wars, and worship me
their King ;

The old order changeth, yielding
place to new;
And we that fight for our fair father
Christ,
Seeing that ye be grown too weak and
old
To drive the heathen from your
Roman wall,
No tribute will we pay: ' so those
great lords
Drew back in wrath, and Arthur
strove with Rome.

And Arthur and his knighthood for
a space
Were all one will, and thro' that
strength the King
Drew in the petty principdoms under
him,
Fought, and in twelve great battles
overcame
The heathen hordes and made a realm
and reign'd.

THE ROUND TABLE.

GARETH AND LYNETTE.
THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT.
GERAINT AND ENID.
BALIN AND BALAN.
MERLIN AND VIVIEN.

LANCELOT AND ELAINE.
THE HOLY GRAIL.
PELLEAS AND ETTARRE.
THE LAST TOURNAMENT.
GUINEVERE.

GARETH AND LYNETTE.

THE last tall son of Lot and Belli-
cent,
And tallest, Gareth, in a showerful
spring
Stared at the spate. A slender-
shafted Pine
Lost footing, fell, and so was whirl'd
away.
'How he went down,' said Gareth,
'as a false knight
Or evil king before my lance if lance
Were mine to use—O senseless cata-
ract,
Bearing all down in thy precipitancy—
And yet thou art but swollen with
cold snows
And mine is living blood: thou dost
His will,
The Maker's, and not knowest, and I
that know,
Have strength and wit, in my good
mother's hall
Linger with vacillating obedience,
Prison'd, and kept and coax'd and
whistled to—
Since the good mother holds me still
a child!
Good mother is bad mother unto me!
A worse were better; yet no worse
would I.

Heaven yield her for it, but in me put
force
To weary her ears with one continu-
ous prayer,
Until she let me fly discaiged to sweep
In ever-highering eagle-circles up
To the great Sun of Glory, and thence
swoop
Down upon all things base, and dash
them dead,
A knight of Arthur, working out his
will,
To cleanse the world. Why, Gawain,
when he came
With Modred hither in the summer-
time,
Ask'd me to tilt with him, the proven
knight.
Modred for want of worthier was the
judge.
Then I so shook him in the saddle,
he said,
"Thou hast half prevail'd against
me," said so—he—
Tho' Modred biting his thin lips was
mute,
For he is always sullen: what care I?'
And Gareth went, and hovering
round her chair
Ask'd, 'Mother, tho' ye count me
still the child,

Sweet mother, do ye love the child?'
 She laugh'd,
 'Thou art but a wild-geese to question it.'
 'Then, mother, an ye love the child,'
 he said,
 'Being a goose and rather tame than wild,
 Hear the child's story.' 'Yea, my well-beloved,
 An 'twere but of the goose and golden eggs.'

And Gareth answer'd her with kindling eyes,
 'Nay, nay, good mother, but this egg of mine
 Was finer gold than any goose can lay;
 For this an Eagle, a royal Eagle, laid
 Almost beyond eye-reach, on such a palm
 As glitters gilded in thy Book of Hours.
 And there was ever haunting round the palm
 A lusty youth, but poor, who often saw
 The splendor sparkling from aloft, and thought
 "An I could climb and lay my hand upon it,
 Then were I wealthier than a leash of kings."
 But ever when he reach'd a hand to climb,
 One, that had loved him from his childhood, caught
 And stay'd him, "Climb not lest thou break thy neck,
 I charge thee by my love," and so the boy,
 Sweet mother, neither clomb, nor brake his neck,
 But brake his very heart in pining for it,
 And past away.'

To whom the mother said,
 'True love, sweet son, had risk'd himself and climb'd,
 And handed down the golden treasure to him.'

And Gareth answer'd her with kindling eyes,
 'Gold? said I gold?—ay then, why he, or she,
 Or whosoe'er it was, or half the world
 Had ventured—*had* the thing I spake of been
 Mere gold—but this was all of that true steel,
 Whereof they forged the brand Excalibur,
 And lightnings play'd about it in the storm,
 And all the little fowl were flurried at it,
 And there were cries and clashings in the nest,
 That sent him from his senses: let me go.'

Then Bellicent bemoan'd herself and said,
 'Hast thou no pity upon my loneliness?
 Lo, where thy father Lot beside the hearth
 Lies like a log, and all but smoulder'd out!
 For ever since when traitor to the King
 He fought against him in the Barons' war,
 And Arthur gave him back his territory,
 His age hath slowly droopt, and now lies there
 A yet-warm corpse, and yet unburial-able,
 No more; nor sees, nor hears, nor speaks, nor knows.
 And both thy brethren are in Arthur's hall,
 Albeit neither loved with that full love I feel for thee, nor worthy such a love:
 Stay therefore thou; red berries charm the bird,
 And thee, mine innocent, the jousts, the wars,
 Who never knewest finger-ache, nor pang
 Of wrench'd or broken limb—an often chance
 In those brain-stunning shocks, and tourney-falls,

Frights to my heart; but stay: follow
the deer
By these tall firs and our fast-falling
burns;
So make thy manhood mightier day
by day;
Sweet is the chase: and I will seek
thee out
Some comfortable bride and fair, to
grace
Thy climbing life, and cherish my
prone year,
Till falling into Lot's forgetfulness
I know not thee, myself, nor anything.
Stay, my best son! ye are yet more
boy than man.'

Then Gareth, 'An ye hold me yet
for child,
Hear yet once more the story of the
child.
For, mother, there was once a King,
like ours.
The prince his heir, when tall and
marriageable,
Ask'd for a bride; and thereupon the
King
Set two before him. One was fair,
strong, arm'd—
But to be won by force—and many
men
Desired her; one, good lack, no man
desired.
And these were the conditions of the
King:
That save he won the first by force, he
needs
Must wed that other, whom no man
desired,
A red-faced bride who knew herself so
vile,
That evermore she long'd to hide her-
self,
Nor fronted man or woman, eye to
eye—
Yea—some she cleaved to, but they
died of her.
And one—they call'd her Fame; and
one,—O Mother,
How can ye keep me tether'd to you—
Shame.
Man am I grown, a man's work must
I do.

Follow the deer? follow the Christ,
the King,
Live pure, speak true, right wrong,
follow the King—
Else, wherefore born?'

To whom the mother said,
'Sweet son, for there be many who
deem him not,
Or will not deem him, wholly proven
King—
Albeit in mine own heart I knew him
King,
When I was frequent with him in my
youth,
And heard him Kingly speak, and
doubted him
No more than he, himself; but felt
him mine,
Of closest kin to me: yet—wilt thou
leave
Thine careful bidding here, and risk
thine all,
Life, limbs, for one that is not proven
King?
Stay, till the cloud that settles round
his birth
Hath lifted but a little. Stay, sweet
son.'

And Gareth answer'd quickly, 'Not
an hour,
So that ye yield me—I will walk thro'
fire,
Mother, to gain it—your full leave to
go.
Not proven, who swept the dust of
ruin'd Rome
From off the threshold of the realm,
and crush'd
The idolaters, and made the people
free?
Who should be King save him who
makes us free?'

So when the Queen, who long had
sought in vain
To break him from the intent to
which he grew,
Found her son's will unwaveringly
one,
She answer'd craftily, 'Will ye walk
thro' fire?

Who walks thro' fire will hardly heed
the smoke.
Ay, go then, an ye must: only one
proof,
Before thou ask the King to make
thee knight,
Of thine obedience and thy love to
me,
Thy mother,—I demand.'

And Gareth cried,
'A hard one, or a hundred, so I go.
Nay—quick! the proof to prove me to
the quick!'

But slowly spake the mother looking
at him,
'Prince, thou shalt go disguised to
Arthur's hall,
And hire thyself to serve for meats
and drinks
Among the scullions and the kitchen-
knaves,
And those that hand the dish across
the bar.
Nor shalt thou tell thy name to any-
one.
And thou shalt serve a twelvemonth
and a day.'

For so the Queen believed that
when her son
Beheld his only way to glory lead
Low down thro' villain kitchen-
vassalage,
Her own true Gareth was too princely-
proud
To pass thereby; so should he rest
with her,
Closed in her castle from the sound
of arms.

Silent awhile was Gareth, then
replied,
'The thrall in person may be free in
soul,
And I shall see the jousts. Thy son
am I,
And since thou art my mother, must
obey.
I therefore yield me freely to thy will;
For hence will I, disguised, and hire
myself

To serve with scullions and with
kitchen-knives;
Nor tell my name to any—no, not the
King.'

Gareth awhile linger'd. The moth-
er's eye
Full of the wistful fear that he would go,
And turning toward him wheresoe'er
he turn'd,
Perplexed his outward purpose, till an
hour,
When waken'd by the wind which
with full voice
Swept bellowing thro' the darkness on
to dawn,
He rose, and out of slumber calling
two
That still had tended on him from his
birth,
Before the wakeful mother heard him,
went.

The three were clad like tillers of
the soil.
Southward they set their faces. The
birds made
Melody on branch, and melody in mid
air.
The damp hill-slopes were quicken'd
into green,
And the live green had kindled into
flowers,
For it was past the time of Easterday.

So, when their feet were planted on
the plain
That broaden'd toward the base of
Camelot,
Far off they saw the silver-misty morn
Rolling her smoke about the Royal
mount,
That rose between the forest and the
field.
At times the summit of the high city
flash'd;
At times the spires and turrets half-
way down
Prick'd thro' the mist; at times the
great gate shone
Only, that open'd on the field below:
Anon, the whole fair city had disap-
pear'd.

Then those who went with Gareth
were amazed,
One crying, 'Let us go no further, lord.
Here is a city of Enchanters, built
By fairy Kings.' The second echo'd
him,

'Lord, we have heard from our wise
man at home
To Northward, that this King is not
the King,
But only changeling out of Fairyland,
Who drave the heathen hence by
sorcery
And Merlin's glamour.' Then the first
again,
'Lord, there is no such city any-
where,
But all a vision.'

Gareth answer'd them
With laughter, swearing he had gla-
mour enow
In his own blood, his princedom,
youth and hopes,
To plunge old Merlin in the Arabian
sea;
So push'd them all unwilling toward
the gate.
And there was no gate like it under
heaven.
For barefoot on the keystone, which
was lined
And rippled like an ever-fleeting wave,
The Lady of the Lake stood: all her
dress
Wept from her sides as water flowing
away;
But like the cross her great and goodly
arms
Stretch'd under all the cornice and
upheld:
And drops of water fell from either
hand;
And down from one a sword was hung,
from one
A censer, either worn with wind and
storm;
And o'er her breast floated the sacred
fish;
And in the space to left of her, and
right,
Were Arthur's wars in weird devices
done,

New things and old co-twisted, as if
Time
Were nothing, so inveterately, that
men
Were giddy gazing there; and over all
High on the top were those three
Queens, the friends
Of Arthur, who should help him at his
need.

Then those with Gareth for so long
a space
Stared at the figures, that at last it
seem'd
The dragon-boughts and elvish em-
blemings
Began to move, seethe, twine and
curl: they call'd
To Gareth, 'Lord, the gateway is alive.

And Gareth likewise on them fixt
his eyes
So long, that ev'n to him they seem'd
to move.
Out of the city a blast of music peal'd.
Back from the gate started the three,
to whom
From out thereunder came an ancient
man,
Long-bearded, saying, 'Who be ye, my
sons?'

Then Gareth, 'We be tillers of the
soil,
Who leaving share in furrow come to
see
The glories of our King: but these, my
men,
(Your city moved so weirdly in the
mist)
Doubt if the King be King at all, or
come
From Fairyland; and whether this be
built
By magic, and by fairy Kings and
Queens;
Or whether there be any city at all,
Or all a vision: and this music now
Hath scared them both, but tell thou
these the truth.'

Then that old Seer made answer
playing on him

And saying, 'Son, I have seen the
good ship sail
Keel upward, and mast downward, in
the heavens,

And solid turrets topsy-turvy in air :
And here is truth ; but an 't please
thee not,

Take thou the truth as thou hast told
it me.

For truly as thou sayest, a Fairy
King

And Fairy Queens have built the city,
son ;

They came from out a sacred moun-
tain-cleft

Toward the sunrise, each with harp in
hand,

And built it to the music of their
harps.

And, as thou sayest, it is enchanted,
son,

For there is nothing in it as it seems
Saving the King ; tho' some there be
that hold

The King a shadow, and the city real :
Yet take thou heed of him, for, so thou
pass

Beneath this archway, then wilt thou
become

A thrall to his enchantments, for the
King

Will bind thee by such vows, as is a
shame

A man should not be bound by, yet the
which

No man can keep ; but, so thou dread
to swear,

Pass not beneath this gateway, but
abide

Without, among the cattle of the field.
For an ye heard a music, like enow

(They are building still, seeing the city
is built

To music, therefore never built at all,
And therefore built for ever.)

Gareth spake

Anger'd, 'Old Master, reverence thine
own beard

That looks as white as utter truth, and
seems

Wellnigh as long as thou art statured
tall !

Why mockest thou the stranger that
hath been
To thee fair-spoken ?'

But the Seer replied,
' Know ye not then the Riddling of the
Bards ?

" Confusion, and illusion, and relation,
Elusion, and occasion, and evasion " ?
I mock thee not but as thou mockest
me,

And all that see thee, for thou art not
who

Thou seemest, but I know thee who
thou art.

And now thou goest up to mock the
King,

Who cannot brook the shadow of any
lie.'

Unmockingly the mocker ending
here

Turn'd to the right, and past along the
plain ;

Whom Gareth looking after said, ' My
men,

Our one white lie sits like a little ghost
Here on the threshold of our enter-
prise.

Let love be blamed for it, not she,
nor I :

Well, we will make amends.'

With all good cheer
He spake and laugh'd, then enter'd
with his twain

Camelot, a city of shadowy palaces
And stately, rich in emblem and the
work

Of ancient kings who did their days in
stone ;

Which Merlin's hand, the Mage at
Arthur's court,

Knowing all arts, had touch'd, and
everywhere

At Arthur's ordinance, tipt with lessen-
ing peak

And pinnacle, and had made it spire
to heaven.

And ever and anon a knight would
pass

Outward, or inward to the hall : his
arms

Clash'd; and the sound was good to
Gareth's ear.
And out of bower and casement shyly
glanced
Eyes of pure women, wholesome stars
of love;
And all about a healthful people slept
As in the presence of a gracious king.

Then into hall Gareth ascending
heard
A voice, the voice of Arthur, and be-
held
Far over heads in that long-vaulted
hall
The splendor of the presence of the
King
Throned, and delivering doom—and
look'd no more—
But felt his young heart hammering in
his ears,
And thought, 'For this half-shadow of
a lie
The truthful King will doom me when
I speak.'
Yet pressing on, tho' all in fear to find
Sir Gawain or Sir Modred, saw nor
one
Nor other, but in all the listening eyes
Of those tall knights, that ranged
about the throne,
Clear honor shining like the dewy
star
Of dawn, and faith in their great
King, with pure
Affection, and the light of victory,
And glory gain'd, and evermore to
gain.

Then came a widow crying to the
King,
'A boon, Sir King! Thy father,
Uther, reft
From my dead lord a field with vi-
lence:
For howsoe'er at first he proffer'd
gold,
Yet, for the field was pleasant in our
eyes,
We yielded not; and then he reft us
of it
Perforce, and left us neither gold nor
field.'

Said Arthur, 'Whether would ye?
gold or field?'
To whom the woman weeping, Nay
my lord,
The field was pleasant in my husband's
eye.'

And Arthur, 'Have thy pleasant
field again,
And thrice the gold for Uther's use
thereof,
According to the years. No boon is
here,
But justice, so thy say be proven true.
Accursed, who from the wrongs his
father did
Would shape himself a right!'

And while she past,
Came yet another widow crying to
him,
'A boon, Sir King! Thine enemy,
King, am I.
With thine own hand thou slewest my
dear lord,
A knight of Uther in the Barons'
war,
When Lot and many another rose and
fought
Against thee, saying thou wert basely
born.
I held with these, and loathe to ask
thee aught.
Yet lo! my husband's brother had my
son
Thrall'd in his castle, and hath
starved him dead;
And standeth seized of that inheri-
tance
Which thou that slewest the sire hast
left the son.
So tho' I scarce can ask it thee for
hate,
Grant me some knight to do the battle
for me,
Kill the foul thief, and wreak me for
my son.'
Then strode a good knight forward,
crying to him,
'A boon, Sir King! I am her kinsman,
I.
Give me to right her wrong, and slay
the man.'

Then came Sir Kay, the seneschal,
and cried,
'A boon, Sir King! ev'n that thou
grant her none,
This railer, that hath mock'd thee in
full hall—
None; or the wholesome boon of gyve
and gag.'

But Arthur, 'We sit King, to help
the wrong'd
Thro' all our realm. The woman
loves her lord.
Peace to thee, woman, with thy loves
and hates!
The kings of old had doom'd thee to
the flames,
Aurelius Emrys would have scourged
thee dead,
And Uther slit thy tongue: but get
thee hence—
Lest that rough humor of the kings
of old
Return upon me! Thou that art her
kin,
Go likewise; lay him low and slay
him not,
But bring him here, that I may judge
the right,
According to the justice of the King:
Then, be he guilty, by that deathless
King
Who lived and died for men, the man
shall die.'

Then came in hall the messenger of
Mark,
A name of evil savor in the land,
The Cornish king. In either hand he
bore
What dazzled all, and shone far-off as
shines
A field of charlock in the sudden
sun
Between two showers, a cloth of palest
gold,
Which down he laid before the throne,
and knelt,
Delivering, that his lord, the vassal
king,
Was ev'n upon his way to Camelot;
For having heard that Arthur of his
grace

Had made his goodly cousin, Tristram,
knight,
And, for himself was of the greater
state,
Being a king, he trusted his liege-lord
Would yield him this large honor all
the more;
So pray'd him well to accept this cloth
of gold,
In token of true heart and fealty.

Then Arthur cried to rend the
cloth, to rend
In pieces, and so cast it on the hearth.
An oak-tree smoulder'd there. 'The
goodly knight!
What! shall the shield of Mark stand
among these?'
For, midway down the side of that
long hall
A stately pile,—whereof along the
front,
Some blazon'd, some but carven, and
some blank,
There ran a treble range of stony
shields,—
Rose, and high-arching overbrow'd
the hearth.
And under every shield a knight was
named:
For this was Arthur's custom in his
hall;
When some good knight had done one
noble deed,
If his arms were carven only; but if
twain
His arms were blazon'd also; but if
none,
The shield was blank and bare with-
out a sign
Saving the name beneath; and Gareth
saw
The shield of Gawain blazon'd rich
and bright,
And Modred's blank as death; and
Arthur cried
To rend the cloth and cast it on the
hearth.

'More like are we to reave him of
his crown
Than make him knight because men
call him king.'

The kings we found, ye know we stay'd
 their hands
 From war among themselves, but left
 them kings;
 Of whom were any bounteous, merci-
 ful,
 Truth-speaking, brave, good livers,
 them we enroll'd
 Among us, and they sit within our hall.
 But Mark hath tarnish'd the great
 name of king,
 As Mark would sully the low state of
 churl:
 And, seeing he hath sent us cloth of
 gold,
 Return, and meet, and hold him from
 our eyes,
 Lest we should lap him up in cloth of
 lead,
 Silenced for ever—craven—a man of
 plots,
 Craft, poisonous counsels, wayside
 ambushings—
 No fault of thine: let Kay the seneschal
 Look to thy wants, and send thee
 satisfied—
 Accursed, who strikes nor lets the
 hand be seen!

And many another suppliant crying
 came
 With noise of ravage wrought by beast
 and man,
 And evermore a knight would ride
 away.

Last, Gareth leaning both hands
 heavily
 Down on the shoulders of the twain,
 his men,
 Approach'd between them toward the
 King, and ask'd,
 'A boon, Sir King (his voice was all
 ashamed),
 For see ye not how weak and hunger-
 worn
 I seem—leaning on these? grant me
 to serve
 For meat and drink among thy
 kitchen-knaves
 A twelvemonth and a day, nor seek
 my name.
 Hereafter I will fight.'

To him the King,
 'A goodly youth and worth a goodlier
 boon!
 But so thou wilt no goodlier, then
 must Kay,
 The master of the meats and drinks,
 be thine.'

He rose and past; then Kay, a man
 of mien
 Wan-sallow as the plant that feels it-
 self
 Root-bitten by white lichen,

'Lo ye now!
 This fellow hath broken from some
 Abbey, where,
 God wot, he had not beef and brewis
 enow,
 However that might chance! but an
 he work,
 Like any pigeon will I cram his crop,
 And sleeker shall he shine than any
 hog.'

Then Lancelot standing near, 'Sir
 Seneschal,
 Sleuth-hound thou knowest, and gray,
 and all the hounds;
 A horse thou knowest, a man thou
 dost not know:
 Broad brows and fair, a fluent hair
 and fine,
 High nose, a nostril large and fine,
 and hands
 Large, fair and fine!—Some young
 lad's mystery—
 But, or from sheepcot or king's hall,
 the boy
 Is noble-natured. Treat him with all
 grace,
 Lest he should come to shame thy
 judging of him.'

Then Kay, 'What murmurest thou
 of mystery?
 Think ye this fellow will poison the
 King's dish?
 Nay, for he spake too fool-like:
 mystery!
 Tut, an the lad were noble, he had ask'd
 For horse and armor: fair and fine,
 forsooth!

Sir Fine-face, Sir Fair-hands? but see
thou to it
That thine own fineness, Lancelot,
some fine day
Undo thee not—and leave my man to
me.'

So Gareth all for glory underwent
The sooty yoke of kitchen-vassal-
age;
Ate with young lads his portion by the
door,
And couch'd at night with grimy
kitchen-knaves.
And Lancelot ever spake him pleas-
antly,
But Kay the seneschal, who loved him
not,
Would hustle and harry him, and
labor him
Beyond his comrade of the hearth,
and set
To turn the broach, draw water, or
hew wood,
Or grosser tasks; and Gareth bow'd
himself
With all obedience to the King, and
wrought
All kind of service with a noble ease
That graced the lowliest act in doing
it.
And when the thralls had talk among
themselves,
And one would praise the love that
linkt the King
And Lancelot—how the King had
saved his life
In battle twice, and Lancelot once the
King's—
For Lancelot was the first in Tourna-
ment,
But Arthur mightiest on the battle-
field—
Gareth was glad. Or if some other
told,
How once the wandering forester at
dawn,
Far over the blue tarns and hazy seas,
On Caer-Eryri's highest found the
King,
A naked babe, of whom the Prophet
spake,
He passes to the Isle Avilion,

He passes and is heal'd and cannot
die'—

Gareth was glad. But if their talk
were foul,

Then would he whistle rapid as any
lark,

Or carol some old roundelay, and so
loud

That first they mock'd, but, after,
reverenced him.

Or Gareth telling some prodigious tale
Of knights, who sliced a red life-
bubbling way

Thro' twenty folds of twisted dragon,
held

All in a gap-mouth'd circle his good
mates

Lying or sitting round him, idle hands,
Charm'd; till Sir Kay, the seneschal,
would come

Blustering upon them, like a sudden
wind

Among dead leaves, and drive them
all apart.

Or when the thralls had sport among
themselves,

So there were anv trial of mastery,
He, by two yards in casting bar or
stone

Was counted best; and if there
chanced a joust,

So that Sir Kay nodded him leave to
go,

Would hurry thither, and when he
saw the knights

Clash like the coming and retiring
wave,

And the spear spring, and good horse
reel, the boy

Was half beyond himself for ecstasy.

So for a month he wrought among
the thralls;

But in the weeks that follow'd, the
good Queen,

Repentant of the word she made him
swear,

And saddening in her childless cas-
tle, sent,

Between the in-crescent and de-
crescent moon,

Arms for her son, and loosed him
from his vow.

This, Gareth hearing from a squire
 of Lot
 With whom he used to play at tour-
 ney once,
 When both were children, and in
 lonely haunts
 Would scratch a ragged oval on the
 sand,
 And each at either dash from either
 end—
 Shame never made girl redder than
 Gareth joy.
 He laugh'd; he sprang. 'Out of the
 smoke, at once
 I leap from Satan's foot to Peter's
 knee—
 These news be mine, none other's—
 nay, the King's—
 Descend into the city:' whereon he
 sought
 The King alone, and found, and told
 him all.

'I have stagger'd thy strong Gawain
 in a tilt
 For pastime; yea, he said it: joust
 can I.
 Make me thy knight—in secret! let
 my name
 Be hidd'n, and give me the first quest,
 I spring
 Like flame from ashes.'

Here the King's calm eye
 Fell on, and check'd, and made him
 flush, and bow
 Lowly, to kiss his hand, who answer'd
 him,
 'Son, the good mother let me know
 thee here,
 And sent her wish that I would yield
 thee thine.
 Make thee my knight? my knights are
 sworn to vows
 Of utter hardihood, utter gentleness,
 And, loving, utter faithfulness in love,
 And uttermost obedience to the King.'

Then Gareth, lightly springing from
 his knees,
 'My King, for hardihood I can prom-
 ise thee.
 For uttermost obedience make demand

Of whom ye gave me to, the Seneschal,
 No mellow master of the meats and
 drinks!
 And as for love, God wot, I love not
 yet,
 But love I shall, God willing.'

And the King—
 'Make thee my knight in secret? yea,
 but he,
 Our noblest brother, and our truest
 man,
 And one with me in all, he needs
 must know.'

'Let Lancelot know, my King, let
 Lancelot know,
 Thy noblest and thy truest!'

And the King—
 'But wherefore would ye men should
 wonder at you?
 Nay, rather for the sake of me, their
 King,
 And the deed's sake my knighthood
 do the deed,
 Than to be noised of.'

Merrily Gareth ask'd,
 'Have I not earn'd my cake in baking
 of it?
 Let be my name until I make my
 name!
 My deeds will speak: it is but for a
 day.'
 So with a kindly hand on Gareth's
 arm
 Smiled the great King, and half-unwill-
 ingly
 Loving his lusty youthhood yielded to
 him.
 Then, after summoning Lancelot
 privily,
 'I have given him the first quest: he
 is not proven.
 Look therefore when he calls for this
 in hall,
 Thou get to horse and follow him far
 away.
 Cover the lions on thy shield, and
 see
 Far as thou mayest, he be nor ta'en
 nor slain.'

Then that same day there past into
the hall
A damsel of high lineage, and a brow
May-blossom, and a cheek of apple-
blossom,
Hawk-eyes; and lightly was her slender
nose
Tip-tilted like the petal of a flower;
She into hall past with her page and
cried,

‘O King, for thou hast driven the
foe without,
See to the foe within! bridge, ford,
beset
By bandits, everyone that owns a tower
The Lord for half a league. Why sit
ye there?
Rest would I not, Sir King, an I were
king,
Till ev’n the lonest hold were all as
free
From cursed bloodshed, as thine altar-
cloth
From that best blood it is a sin to
spill.’

‘Comfort thyself,’ said Arthur, ‘I
nor mine
Rest: so my knighthood keep the
vows they swore,
The wastest moorland of our realm
shall be
Safe, damsel, as the centre of this hall.
What is thy name? thy need?’

‘My name?’ she said—
‘Lynette my name; noble; my need, a
knight
To combat for my sister, Lyonors,
A lady of high lineage, of great lands,
And comely, yea, and comelier than
myself.
She lives in Castle Perilous: a river
Runs in three loops about her living-
place;
And o’er it are three passings, and
three knights
Defend the passings, brethren, and a
fourth
And of that four the mightiest, holds
her stay’d
In her own castle, and so besieges her

To break her will, and make her wed
with him:
And but delays his purport till thou
send
To do the battle with him, thy chief
man
Sir Lancelot whom he trusts to over-
throw,
Then wed, with glory: but she will
not wed
Save whom she loveth, or a holy life.
Now therefore have I come for Lancelot.’

Then Arthur mindful of Sir Gareth
ask’d,
‘Damsel, ye know this Order lives to
crush
All wrongers of the Realm. But say,
these four,
Who be they? What the fashion of the
men?’

‘They be of foolish fashion, O Sir
King,
The fashion of that old knight-
errantry
Who ride abroad, and do but what
they will;
Courteous or bestial from the moment,
such
As have nor law nor king; and three
of these
Proud in their fantasy call themselves
the Day,
Morning-Star, and Noon-Sun, and
Evening-Star,
Being strong fools; and never a whit
more wise
The fourth, who alway rideth arm’d in
black,
A huge man-beast of boundless sav-
agery.
He names himself the Night and
oftener Death,
And wears a helmet mounted with a
skull,
And bears a skeleton figured on his
arms,
To show that who may slay or scape
the three,
Slain by himself, shall enter endless
night.

And all these four be fools, but mighty
men,
And therefore am I come for Lancelot.'

Hereat Sir Gareth call'd from where
he rose,
A head with kindling eyes above the
throng,
'A boon, Sir King—this quest!' then
—for he mark'd
Kay near him groaning like a wounded
bull—
'Yea, King, thou knowest thy kitchen-
knave am I,
And mighty thro' thy meats and drinks
am I,
And I can topple over a hundred
such.
Thy promise, King,' and Arthur
glancing at him,
Brought down a momentary brow.
'Rough, sudden,
And pardonable, worthy to be
knight—
Go therefore,' and all hearers were
amazed.

But on the damsel's forehead shame,
pride, wrath
Slew the May-white: she lifted either
arm,
'Fie on thee, King! I ask'd for thy
chief knight,
And thou hast given me but a kitchen-
knave.'
Then ere a man in hall could stay her,
turn'd,
Fled down the lane of access to the
King,
Took horse, descended the slope
street, and past
The weird white gate, and paused
without, beside
The field of tourney, murmuring
'kitchen-knave.'

Now two great entries open'd from
the hall,
At one end one, that gave upon a
range
Of level pavement where the King
would pace

At sunrise, gazing over plain and
wood;
And down from this a lordly stairway
sloped
Till lost in blowing trees and tops of
towers;
And out by this main doorway past
the King.
But one was counter to the hearth,
and rose
High that the highest-crested helm
could ride
Therethro' nor graze: and by this
entry fled
The damsel in her wrath, and on to
this
Sir Gareth strode, and saw without
the door
King Arthur's gift, the worth of half a
town,
A warhorse of the best, and near it
stood
The two that out of north had follow'd
him:
This bare a maiden shield, a casque;
that held
The horse, the spear; whereat Sir
Gareth loosed
A cloak that dropt from collar-bone
to heel,
A cloth of roughest web, and cast it
down,
And from it like a fuel-smother'd fire,
That lookt half-dead, brake bright,
and flash'd as those
Dull-coated things, that making slide
apart
Their dusk wing-cases, all beneath
there burns
A jewell'd harness, ere they pass and
fly.
So Gareth ere he parted flash'd in
arms.
Then as he donn'd the helm, and took
the shield
And mounted horse and graspt a
spear, of grain
Storm-strengthen'd on a windy site,
and tipt
With trenchant steel, around him
slowly prest
The people, while from out of kitchen
came

The thralls in throng, and seeing who
had work'd
Lustier than any, and whom they
could but love,
Mounted in arms, threw up their caps
and cried,
'God bless the King, and all his
fellowship!'
And on thro' lances of shouting Gareth
rode
Down the slope street, and past with-
out the gate.

So Gareth past with joy; but as the
cur
Pluckt from the cur he fights with, ere
his cause
Be cool'd by fighting, follows, being
named,
His owner, but remembers all, and
growls
Remembering, so Sir Kay beside the
door
Mutter'd in scorn of Gareth whom he
used
To harry and hustle.

'Bound upon a quest
With horse and arms—the King hath
past his time—
My scullion knave! Thralls to your
work again,
For an your fire be low ye kindle mine!
Will there be dawn in West and eve
in East?
Begone!—my knave!—belike and like
enow
Some old head-blow not heeded in his
youth
So shook his wits they wander in his
prime—
Crazed! How the villain lifted up
his voice,
Nor shamed to bawl himself a kitchen-
knave.
Tut: he was tame and meek enow with
me,
Till peacock'd up with Lancelot's
noticing.
Well—I will after my loud knave, and
learn
Whether he know me for his master
yet.

Out of the smoke he came, and so my
lance
Hold, by God's grace, he shall into the
mire—
Thence, if the King awaken from his
craze,
Into the smoke again.'

But Lancelot said,
'Kay, wherefore wilt thou go against
the King,
For that did never he whereon ye rail,
But ever meekly served the King in
thee?
Abide: take counsel; for this lad is
great
And lusty, and knowing both of lance
and sword.'
'Tut, tell not me,' said Kay, 'ye are
overfine
To mar stout knaves with foolish
courtesies.'
Then mounted, on thro' silent faces
rode
Down the slope city, and out beyond
the gate.

But by the field of tourney lingering
yet
Mutter'd the damsel, 'Wherefore did
the King
Scorn me? for, were Sir Lancelot
lackt, at least
He might have yielded to me one of
those
Who tilt for lady's love and glory here,
Rather than—O sweet heaven! O fie
upon him—
His kitchen-knave.'

To whom Sir Gareth drew
(And there were none but few goodlier
than he)
Shining in arms, 'Damsel, the quest is
mine.
Lead, and I follow.' She thereat, as
one
That smells a foul-flesh'd agaric in the
holt,
And deems it carrion of some wood-
land thing,
Or shrew, or weasel, nipt her slender
nose

With petulant thumb and finger, shrilling,
 'Hence!
 Avoid, thou smell'st all of kitchen-grease.
 And look who comes behind,' for there
 was Kay.
 'Knowest thou not me? thy master?
 I am Kay.
 We lack thee by the hearth.'

And Gareth to him,
 'Master no more! too well I know
 thee, ay—
 The most ungente knight in Arthur's
 hall.'
 'Have at thee then,' said Kay: they
 shock'd, and Kay
 Fell shoulder-slipt, and Gareth cried
 again,
 'Lead, and I follow,' and fast away she
 fled.

But after sod and shingle ceased to
 fly
 Behind her, and the heart of her good
 horse
 Was nigh to burst with violence of the
 beat,
 Perforce she stay'd, and overtaken
 spoke.

'What doest thou, scullion, in my
 fellowship?
 Deem'st thou that I accept thee aught
 the more
 Or love thee better, that by some de-
 vice
 Full cowardly, or by mere unhappiness,
 Thou hast overthrown and slain thy
 master—thou!—
 Dish-washer and broach-turner, loon!
 —to me
 Thou smell'st all of kitchen as before.'

'Damsel,' Sir Gareth answer'd
 gently, 'say
 Whate'er ye will, but whatsoe'er ye say,
 I leave not till I finish this fair quest,
 Or die therefore.'

'Ay, wilt thou finish it?
 Sweet lord, how like a noble knight
 he talks!

The listening rogue hath caught the
 manner of it.
 But, knave, anon thou shalt be met
 with, knave,
 And then by such a one that thou for
 all
 The kitchen brewis that was ever supt
 Shalt not once dare to look him in the
 face.'

'I shall assay,' said Gareth with a
 smile
 That madden'd her, and away she
 flash'd again
 Down the long avenues of a boundless
 wood,
 And Gareth, following was again be-
 knaved.

'Sir Kitchen-knave, I have miss'd
 the only way
 Where Arthur's men are set along the
 wood;
 The wood is nigh as full of thieves as
 leaves:
 If both be slain, I am rid of thee; but
 yet,
 Sir Scullion, canst thou use that spit
 of thine?
 Fight, an thou canst. I have miss'd
 the only way.'

So till the dusk that follow'd even-
 song
 Rode on the two, reviler and reviled;
 Then after one long slope was
 mounted, saw,
 Bowl-shaped, thro' tops of many
 thousand pines
 A gloomy-gladed hollow slowly sink
 To westward—in the deeps whereof a
 mere,
 Round as the red eye of an Eagle-owl,
 Under the half-dead sunset glared;
 and shouts
 Ascended, and there brake a serving-
 man
 Flying from out of the black wood, and
 crying,
 'They have bound my lord to cast him
 in the mere.'
 Then Gareth, 'Bound am I to right
 the wrong'd,

But straitlier bound am I to bide with thee.'

And when the damsel spake contemptuously,

'Lead, and I follow,' Gareth cried again,

'Follow, I lead!' so down among the pines

He plunged; and there, blackshadow'd nigh the mere,

And mid-thigh-deep in bulrushes and reed,

Saw six tall men haling a seventh along,

A stone about his neck to drown him in it.

Three with good blows he quieted, but three

Fled thro' the pines; and Gareth loosed the stone

From off his neck, then in the mere beside

Tumbled it; oilily bubbled up the mere.

Last, Gareth loosed his bonds and on free feet

Set him, a stalwart Baron, Arthur's friend.

'Well that ye came, or else these caitiff rogues

Had wreak'd themselves on me; good cause is theirs

To hate me, for my wont hath ever been

To catch my thief, and then like vermin here

Drown him, and with a stone about his neck;

And under this wan water many of them

Lie rotting, but at night let go the stone,

And rise, and flickering in a grimly light

Dance on the mere. Good now, ye have saved a life

Worth somewhat as the cleanser of this wood.

And fain would I reward thee worshipfully.

What guerdon will ye?'

Gareth sharply spake,
'None! for the deed's sake have I done the deed,
In uttermost obedience to the King.
But wilt thou yield this damsel harbor-age?'

Whereat the Baron saying, 'I well believe
You be of Arthur's Table,' a light laugh
Broke from Lynette, 'Ay, truly of a truth,
And in a sort, being Arthur's kitchen-knave!—
But deem not I accept thee aught the more,
Scullion, for running sharply with thy spit
Down on a rout of craven foresters.
A thresher with his flail had scatter'd them.
Nay—for thou smellst of the kitchen still.
But an this lord will yield us harbor-age,
Well.'

So she spake. A league beyond the wood,
All in a full-fair manor and a rich,
His towers where that day a feast had been
Held in high hall, and many a viand left,
And many a costly cate, received the three.
And there they placed a peacock in his pride
Before the damsel, and the Baron set
Gareth beside her, but at once she rose.

'Meseems, that here is much discourtesy,
Setting this knave, Lord Baron, at my side.
Hear me—this morn I stood in Arthur's hall,
And pray'd the King would grant me Lancelot
To fight the brotherhood of Day and Night—

The last a monster unsubduable
Of any save of him for whom I call'd—
Suddenly bawls this frontless kitchen-
knave,

"The quest is mine; thy kitchen-
knave am I,
And mighty thro' thy meats and
drinks am I."
Then Arthur all at once gone mad
replies,
"Go therefore," and so gives the
quest to him—
Him—here—a villain fitter to stick
swine
Than ride abroad redressing women's
wrong,
Or sit beside a noble gentlewoman.'

Then half-ashamed and part amazed,
the lord
Now look'd at one and now at other,
left
The damsel by the peacock in his
pride,
And, seating Gareth at another board,
Sat down beside him, ate and then
began.

'Friend, whether thou be kitchen-
knave, or not,
Or whether it be the maiden's fantasy,
And whether she be mad, or else the
King,
Or both or neither, or thyself be mad,
I ask not: but thou strikest a strong
stroke,
For strong thou art and goodly there-
withal,
And saver of my life; and therefore
now,
For here be mighty men to joust with,
weigh
Whether thou wilt not with thy dam-
sel back
To crave again Sir Lancelot of the
King.
Thy pardon; I but speak for thine
avail,
The saver of my life.'

And Gareth said,
'Full pardon, but I follow up the
quest,

Despise of Day and Night and Death
and Hell.'

So when, next morn, the lord whose
life he saved
Had, some brief space, convey'd them
on their way
And left them with God-speed, Sir
Gareth spake,
'Lead, and I follow.' Haughtily she
replied,

'I fly no more: I allow thee for an
hour.
Lion and stoat have isled together,
knave,
In time of flood. Nay, furthermore,
methinks
Some ruth is mine for thee. Back
wilt thou, fool?
For hard by here is one will overthrow
And slay thee: then will I to court
again,
And shame the King for only yielding
me
My champion from the ashes of his
hearth.'

To whom Sir Gareth answer'd
courteously,
'Say thou thy say, and I will do my
deed.
Allow me for mine hour, and thou
wilt find
My fortunes all as fair as hers who lay
Among the ashes and wedded the
King's son.'

Then to the shore of one of those
long loops
Wherethro' the serpent river coil'd,
they came.
Rough-thicketed were the banks and
steep; the stream
Full, narrow; this a bridge of single
arc
Took at a leap; and on the further
side
Arose a silk pavilion, gay with gold
In streaks and rays, and all Lent-lily
in hue,
Save that the dome was purple, and
above,

Crimson, a slender banneret fluttering.
 And therefore the lawless warrior
 paced
 Unarm'd, and calling, 'Damsel, is this
 he,
 The champion thou hast brought
 from Arthur's hall?
 For whom we let thee pass.' 'Nay,
 nay,' she said,
 'Sir Morning-Star. The King in
 utter scorn
 Of thee and thy much folly hath sent
 thee here
 His kitchen-knave: and look thou to
 thyself:
 See that he fall not on thee suddenly,
 And slay thee unarm'd: he is not
 knight but knave.'

Then at his call, 'O daughters of
 the Dawn,
 And servants of the Morning-Star,
 approach,
 Arm me,' from out the silken curtain-
 folds
 Bare-footed and bare-headed three
 fair girls
 In gilt and rosy raiment came: their
 feet
 In dewy grasses glisten'd; and the hair
 All over glanced with dewdrop or
 with gem
 Like sparkles in the stone Avanturine.
 These arm'd him in blue arms, and
 gave a shield
 Blue also, and thereon the morning
 star.
 And Gareth silent gazed upon the
 knight,
 Who stood a moment, ere his horse
 was brought,
 Glorying; and in the stream beneath
 him, shone
 Immingled with Heaven's azure
 waveringly,
 The gay pavilion and the naked feet,
 His arms, the rosy raiment, and the
 star.

Then she that watch'd him, 'Where-
 fore stare ye so?
 Thou shakest in thy fear: there yet is
 time:

Flee down the valley before he get to
 horse.
 Who will cry shame? Thou art not
 knight but knave.'

Said Gareth, 'Damsel, whether
 knave or knight,
 Far liefer had I fight a score of times
 Than hear thee so missay me and
 revile.
 Fair words were best for him who
 fights for thee;
 But truly foul are better, for they send
 That strength of anger thro' mine
 arms, I know
 That I shall overthrow him.'

And he that bore
 The star, when mounted, cried from
 o'er the bridge,
 'A kitchen-knave, and sent in scorn
 of me!
 Such fight not I, but answer scorn
 with scorn.
 For this were shame to do him further
 wrong
 Than set him on his feet, and take his
 horse
 And arms, and so return him to the
 King.
 Come, therefore, leave thy lady lightly,
 knave.
 Avoid: for it beseemeth not a knave
 To ride with such a lady.'

'Dog, thou liest.
 I spring from loftier lineage than thine
 own.'
 He spake; and all at fiery speed the
 two
 Shock'd on the central bridge, and
 either spear
 Bent but not brake, and either knight
 at once,
 Hurl'd as a stone from out of a catapult
 Beyond his horse's crupper and the
 bridge,
 Fell, as if dead; but quickly rose and
 drew,
 And Gareth lash'd so fiercely with his
 brand
 He drove his enemy backward down
 the bridge,

The damsel crying, 'Well-stricken,
kitchen-knave!'
Till Gareth's shield was cloven; but
one stroke
Laid him that clove it grovelling on
the ground.

Then cried the fall'n, 'Take not
my life: I yield.'
And Gareth, 'So this damsel ask it of
me
Good—I accord it easily as a grace.'
She reddening, 'Insolent scullion: I
of thee?
I bound to thee for any favor ask'd!'
'Then shall he die.' And Gareth
there unlaced
His helmet as to slay him, but she
shriek'd,
'Be not so hardy, scullion, as to slay
One nobler than thyself.' 'Damsel,
thy charge
Is an abounding pleasure to me.
Knight,
Thy life is thine at her command.
Arise
And quickly pass to Arthur's hall,
and say
His kitchen-knave hath sent thee.
See thou crave
His pardon for thy breaking of his
laws.
Myself, when I return, will plead for
thee.
Thy shield is mine—farewell; and,
damsel, thou,
Lead, and I follow.'

And fast away she fled.
Then when he came upon her, spake,
'Methought,
Knave, when I watch'd thee striking
on the bridge
The savor of thy kitchen came upon
me
A little faintlier: but the wind hath
changed:
I scent it twenty-fold.' And then she
sang,
'"O morning star" (not that tall felon
there
Whom thou by sorcery or unhappi-
ness

Or some device, hast foully over-
thrown),
"O morning star that smilest in the
blue,
O star, my morning dream hath proven
true,
Smile sweetly, thou! my love hath
smiled on me."

'But thou begone, take counsel, and
away,
For hard by here is one that guards a
ford—
The second brother in their fool's
parable—
Will pay thee all thy wages, and to
boot.
Care not for shame: thou art not
knight but knave.'

To whom Sir Gareth answer'd, laugh-
ingly,
'Parables? Hear a parable of the
knave.
When I was kitchen-knave among the
rest
Fierce was the hearth, and one of my
co-mates
Own'd a rough dog, to whom he cast
his coat,
"Guard it," and there was none to
meddle with it.
And such a coat art thou, and thee the
King
Gave me to guard, and such a dog am
I,
To worry, and not to flee—and—
knight or knave—
The knave that doth thee service as
full knight
Is all as good, meseems, as any knight
Toward thy sister's freeing.'

'Ay, Sir Knave!
Ay, knave, because thou strik'st as a
knight,
Being but knave, I hate thee all the
more.'

'Fair damsel, you should worship
me the more,
That, being but knave, I throw thine
enemies.'

'Ay, ay,' she said, 'but thou shalt meet thy match.'

So when they touch'd the second riverloop,
Huge on a huge red horse, and all in mail
Burnish'd to blinding, shone the Noon-day Sun
Beyond a raging shallow. As if the flower,
That blows a globe of after arrowlets,
Ten thousand-fold had grown, flash'd the fierce shield,
All sun; and Gareth's eyes had flying blots

Before them when he turn'd from watching him.
He from beyond the roaring shallow roar'd,

'What doest thou, brother, in my marches here?'

And she athwart the shallow shrill'd again,

'Here is a kitchen-knave from Arthur's hall

Hath overthrown thy brother, and hath his arms.'

'Ugh!' cried the Sun, and visoring up a red

And cipher face of rounded foolishness,

Push'd horse across the foamings of the ford,

Whom Gareth met midstream: no room was there

For lance or tourney-skill: four strokes they struck

With sword, and these were mighty; the new knight

Had fear he might be shamed; but as the Sun

Heaved up a ponderous arm to strike the fifth,

The hoof of his horse slipt in the stream, the stream

Descended, and the Sun was wash'd away.

Then Gareth laid his lance athwart the ford;

So drew him home; but he that fought no more,

As being all bone-batter'd on the rock,

Yielded; and Gareth sent him to the King.

'Myself when I return will plead for thee.'

'Lead, and I follow.' Quietly she led.

'Hath not the good wind, damsel, changed again?'

'Nay, not a point: nor art thou victor here.'

There lies a ridge of slate across the ford;

His horse thereon stumbled—ay, for I saw it.

"O Sun" (not this strong fool whom thou, Sir Knave,

Hast overthrown thro' mere unhappiness),

"O Sun, that wakenest all to bliss or pain,

O moon, that layest all to sleep again,

Shine sweetly: twice my love hath smiled on me.'

'What knowest thou of lovesong or of love?

Nay, nay, God wot, so thou wert nobly born,

Thou hast a pleasant presence. Yea, perchance,—

"O dewy flowers that open to the sun,

O dewy flowers that close when day is done,

Blow sweetly: twice my love hath smiled on me."

'What knowest thou of flowers, except, belike,

To garnish meats with? hath not our good King

Who lent me thee, the flower of kitchendom,

A foolish love for flowers? what stick ye round

The pasty? wherewithal deck the boar's head?

Flowers? nay, the boar hath rose-maries and bay.

"O birds, that warble to the morn-
ing sky,
O birds that warble as the day goes by,
Sing sweetly: twice my love hath
smiled on me."

'What knowest thou of birds, lark,
mavis, merle,
Linnet? what dream ye when they
utter forth
May-music growing with the growing
light,
Their sweet sun-worship? these be for
the snare
(So runs thy fancy) these be for the
spit,
Larding and basting. See thou have
not now
Larded thy last, except thou turn and
fly.
There stands the third fool of their
allegory.'

For there beyond a bridge of treble
bow,
All in a rose-red from the west, and
all
Naked it seem'd, and glowing in the
broad
Deep-dimpled current underneath, the
knight,
That named himself the Star of Even-
ing, stood.

And Gareth, 'Wherefore waits the
madman there
Naked in open dayshine?' 'Nay,'
she cried,
'Not naked, only wrapt in harden'd
skins
That fit him like his own; and so ye
cleave
His armor off him, these will turn the
blade.'

Then the third brother shouted o'er
the bridge,
'O brother-star, why shine ye here so
low?
Thy ward is higher up: but have ye
slain
The damsel's champion?' and the
damsel cried,

'No star of thine, but shot from
Arthur's heaven
With all disaster unto thine and
thee!
For both thy younger brethren have
gone down
Before this youth; and so wilt thou,
Sir Star;
Art thou not old?'

'Old, damsel, old and hard,
Old, with the might and breath of
twenty boys.'
Said Gareth, 'Old, and over-bold in
brag!
But that same strength which threw
the Morning Star
Can throw the Evening.'

Then that other blew
A hard and deadly note upon the
horn.
'Approach and arm me!' With slow
steps from out
An old storm-beaten, russet, many-
stain'd
Pavilion, forth a grizzled damsel
came,
And arm'd him in old arms, and
brought a helm
With but a drying evergreen for
crest,
And gave a shield whereon the Star of
Even
Half-tarnish'd and half-bright, his em-
blem, shone.
But when it glitter'd o'er the saddle-
bow,
They madly hurl'd together on the
bridge;
And Gareth overthrew him, lighted,
drew,
There met him drawn, and overthrew
him again,
But up like fire he started: and as
oft
As Gareth brought him grovelling on
his knees,
So many a time he vaulted up again;
Till Gareth panted hard, and his
great heart,
Foredooming all his trouble was in
vain,

Labor'd within him, for he seem'd as
one

That all in later, sadder age begins
To war against ill uses of a life,
But these from all his life arise, and
cry,

'Thou hast made us lords, and canst
not put us down!' He half despairs; so Gareth seem'd
to strike

Vainly, the damsel clamoring all the
while,

'Well done, knave-knight, well
stricken, O good knight-knave—
O knave, as noble as any of all the
knights—

Shame me not, shame me not. I have
prophesied—
Strike, thou art worthy of the Table
Round—

His arms are old, he trusts the
harden'd skin—

Strike—strike—the wind will never
change again.'

And Gareth hearing ever stronglier
snote,

And hew'd great pieces of his armor
off him,

But lash'd in vain against the harden'd
skin,

And could not wholly bring him under,
more

Than loud Southwesterns, rolling
ridge on ridge,

The buoy that rides at sea, and dips
and springs

For ever; till at length Sir Gareth's
brand

Clash'd his, and brake it utterly to the
hilt.

'I have thee now;' but forth that
other sprang,

And, all unknightlike, writhed his wiry
arms

Around him, till he felt, despite his
mail,

Strangled, but straining ev'n his utter-
most

Cast, and so hurl'd him headlong o'er
the bridge

Down to the river, sink or swim, and
cried,

'Lead, and I follow.'

But the damsel said,
'I lead no longer; ride thou at my
side;
Thou art the kingliest of all kitchen-
knaves.

"O trefoil, sparkling on the rainy
plain,
O rainbow with three colors after
rain,
Shine sweetly: thrice my love hath
smiled on me."

'Sir,—and, good faith, I fain had
added—Knight,
But that I heard thee call thyself a
knave,—
Shamed am I that I so rebuked,
reviled,
Missaid thee; noble I am; and thought
the King
Scorn'd me and mine; and now thy
pardon, friend,
For thou hast ever answer'd court-
eously,
And wholly bold thou art, and meek
withal
As any of Arthur's best, but, being
knave,
Hast mazed my wit: I marvel what
thou art.

'Damsel,' he said, 'you be not all to
blame,
Saving that you mistrusted our good
King
Would handle scorn, or yield you,
asking, one
Not fit to cope your quest. You said
your say;
Mine answer was my deed. Good
sooth! I hold
He scarce is knight, yea but half-man,
nor meet
To fight for gentle damsel, he, who
lets
His heart be stirr'd with any foolish
heat
At any gentle damsel's waywardness.
Shamed? care not! thy foul sayings
fought for me:
And seeing now thy words are fair,
methinks

There rides no knight, not Lancelot,
his great self,
Hath force to quell me.'

Nigh upon that hour
When the lone hern forgets his melan-
choly,
Lets down his other leg, and stretching,
dreams
Of goodly supper in the distant pool,
Then turn'd the noble damsel smiling
at him,
And told him of a cavern hard at
hand,
Where bread and baked meats and
good red wine
Of Southland, which the Lady Lyonors
Had sent her coming champion, waited
him.

Anon they past a narrow comb
wherein
Were slabs of rock with figures,
knights on horse
Sculptured, and deckt in slowly-waning
hues.
'Sir Knave, my knight, a hermit once
was here,
Whose holy hand hath fashion'd on
the rock
The war of Time against the soul of
man.
And yon four fools have suck'd their
allegory
From these damp walls, and taken but
the form.
Know ye not these?' and Gareth lookt
and read—
In letters like to those the vexillary
Hath left crag-carven o'er the stream-
ing Gelt—
'PHOSPHORUS,' then 'MERIDIES'—
'HESPERUS'—
'NOX'—'MORS,' beneath five figures,
armed men,
Slab after slab, their faces forward
all,
And running down the 'Soul, a Shape
that fled
With broken wings, torn raiment and
loose hair,
For help and shelter to the hermit's
cave.

'Follow the faces, and we find it.
Look,
Who comes behind?'

For one—delay'd at first
Thro' helping back the dislocated Kay
To Camelot, then by what thereafter
chanced,
The damsel's headlong error thro' the
wood—
Sir Lancelot, having swum the river-
loops—
His blue shield-lions cover'd—softly
drew
Behind the twain, and when he saw
the star
Gleam, on Sir Gareth's turning to him,
cried,
'Stay, felon knight, I avenge me for
'my friend.'
And Gareth crying prick'd against the
cry;
But when they closed—in a moment—
at one touch
Of that skill'd spear, the wonder of
the world—
Went sliding down so easily, and fell,
That when he found the grass within
his hands
He laugh'd; the laughter jarr'd upon
Lynette:
Harshly she ask'd him, 'Shamed and
overthrown,
And tumbled back into the kitchen-
knave,
Why laugh ye? that ye blew your boast
in vain?'
'Nay, noble damsel, but that I, the
son
Of old King Lot and good Queen Belli-
cent,
And victor of the bridges and the
ford,
And knight of Arthur, here lie thrown
by whom
I know not, all thro' mere unhappi-
ness—
Device and sorcery and unhappiness—
Out, sword; we are thrown!' And
Lancelot answer'd, 'Prince,
O Gareth—thro' the mere unhappiness
Of one who came to help thee, not to
harm,

Lancelot, and all as glad to find thee
whole,
As on the day when Arthur knighted
him.'

Then Gareth, 'Thou—Lancelot!—
thine the hand
That threw me? An some chance to
mar the boast
Thy brethren of thee make—which
could not chance—
Had sent thee down before a lesser
spear,
Shamed had I been, and sad—O Lancelot—thou!'

Whereat the maiden, petulant,
'Lancelot,
Why came ye not, when call'd? and
wherefore now
Come ye, not call'd? I gloried in my
knave,
Who being still rebuked, would answer still
Courteous as any knight—but now, if
knight,
The marvel dies, and leaves me fool'd
and trick'd,
And only wondering wherefore play'd
upon:
And doubtful whether I and mine be
scorn'd.
Where should be truth if not in
Arthur's hall,
In Arthur's presence? Knight, knave,
prince and fool,
I hate thee and forever.'

And Lancelot said,
'Blessed be thou, Sir Gareth! knight
art thou
To the King's best wish. O damsel,
be you wise
To call him shamed, who is but over-
thrown?
Thrown have I been, nor once, but
many a time.
Victor from vanquish'd issues at the
last,
And overthrower from being over-
thrown.
With sword we have not striven; and
thy good horse'

And thou are weary; yet not less I
felt
Thy manhood thro' that wearied lance
of thine.
Well hast thou done; for all the stream
is freed,
And thou hast wreak'd his justice on
his foes,
And when reviled, hast answer'd gra-
ciously,
And makest merry when overthrown.
Prince, Knight,
Hail, Knight and Prince, and of our
Table Round!'

And then when turning to Lynette
he told
The tale of Gareth, petulantly she
said,
'Ay well—ay well—for worse than
being fool'd
Of others, is to fool one's self. A
cave,
Sir Lancelot, is hard by, with meats
and drinks
And forage for the horse, and flint for
fire,
But all about it flies a honeysuckle.
Seek, till we find.' And when*they
sought and found,
Sir Gareth drank and ate, and all his
life
Past into sleep; on whom the maiden
gazed.
'Sound sleep be thine! sound cause
to sleep hast thou.
Wake lusty! Seem I not as tender
to him
As any mother? Ay, but such a one
As all day long hath rated at her
child,
And vext his day, but blesses him
asleep—
Good lord, how sweetly smells the
honeysuckle
In the hush'd night, as if the world
were one
Of utter peace, and love, and gentle-
ness!
O Lancelot, Lancelot!—and she clapt
her hands—
'Full merry am I to find my goodly
knave

Is knight and noble. See now, sworn
have I,
Else yon black felon had not let me
pass,
To bring thee back to do the battle
with him.
Thus and thou goest, he will fight thee
first;
Who doubts thee victor? so will my
knight-knave
Miss the full flower of this accom-
plishment.'

Said Lancelot, 'Peradventure he,
you name,
May know my shield. Let Gareth,
an he will,
Change his for mine, and take my
charger, fresh,
Not to be spurr'd, loving the battle
as well
As he that rides him.' 'Lancelot-
like,' she said,
'Courteous in this, Lord Lancelot, as
in all.'

And Gareth, wakening, fiercely
clutch'd the shield;
'Ramp ye lance-splintering lions, on
whom all spears
Are rotten sticks! ye seem agape to
roar!
Yea, ramp and roar at leaving of
your lord!—
Care not, good beasts, so well I care
for you.
O noble Lancelot, from my hold on
these
Streams virtue—fire—thro' one that
will not shame
Even the shadow of Lancelot under
shield.
Hence: let us go.'

Silent the silent field
They traversed. Arthur's harp tho'
summer-wan,
In counter motion to the clouds,
allured
The glance of Gareth dreaming on his
liege.
A star shot: 'Lo,' said Gareth, 'the
foe falls!'

An owl whoopt: 'Hark the victor
pealing there!'
Suddenly she that rode upon his left
Clung to the shield that Lancelot
lent him, crying,
'Yield, yield him this again: 'tis he
must fight:
I curse the tongue that all thro' yes-
terday
Reveled thee, and hath wrought on
Lancelot now
To lend thee horse and shield: won-
ders ye have done;
Miracles ye cannot: here is glory
enow
In having flung the three: I see thee
maim'd,
Mangled: I swear thou canst not
fling the fourth.'

'And wherefore, damsel? tell me
all ye know.
You cannot scare me; nor rough
face, or voice,
Brute bulk of limb, or boundless
savagery
Appal me from the quest.'

'Nay, Prince,' she cried,
'God wot, I never look'd upon the
face,
Seeing he never rides abroad by
day;
But watch'd him have I like a phan-
tom pass
Chilling the night: nor have I heard
the voice.
Always he made his mouthpiece of a
page
Who came and went, and still re-
ported him
As closing in himself the strength of
ten,
And when his anger tare him, massa-
cring
Man, woman, lad and girl—yea, the
soft babe!
Some hold that he hath swallow'd
infant flesh,
Monster! O Prince, I went for Lance-
lot first,
The quest Lancelot's: give him
back the shield.'

Said Gareth laughing, 'An he fight
for this,
Belike he wins it as the better man ;
Thus—and not else !'

But Lancelot on him urged
All the devisings of their chivalry
When one might meet a mightier
than himself ;
How best to manage horse, lance,
sword and shield,
And so fill up the gap where force
might fail
With skill and fineness. Instant
were his words.

Then Gareth, 'Here be rules. I
know but one—
To dash against mine enemy and to
win.
Yet have I watch'd thee victor in the
joust,
And seen thy way.' 'Heaven help
thee,' sigh'd Lynette.

Then for a space, and under cloud
that grew
To thunder-gloom palling all stars,
they rode
In converse till she made her palfrey
halt,
Lifted an arm, and softly whisper'd
'There.'
And all the three were silent seeing,
pitch'd
Beside the Castle Perilous on flat
field,
A huge pavilion like a mountain
peak
Sunder the glooming crimson on the
marge,
Black, with black banner, and a long
black horn
Beside it hanging ; which Sir Gareth
graspt,
And so, before the two could hinder
him,
Sent all his heart and breath thro' all
the horn.
Echo'd the walls ; a light twinkled ;
anon
Came lights and lights, and once
again he blew ;

Whereon were hollow tramlings up
and down
And muffled voices heard, and shad-
ows past ;
Till high above him, circled with her
maids,
The Lady Lyonors at a window stood,
Beautiful among lights, and waving
to him
White hands, and courtesy ; but when
the Prince
Three times had blown—after long
hush—at last—
The huge pavilion slowly yielded up,
Thro' those black foldings, that which
housed therein.
High on a nightblack horse, in night-
black arms,
With white breast-bone, and barren
ribs of Death,
And crown'd with fleshless laughter
—some ten steps—
In the half-light—thro' the dim dawn
—advanced
The monster, and then paused, and
spake no word.

But Gareth spake and all indig-
nantly,
'Fool, for thou hast, men say, the
strength of ten,
Canst thou not trust the limbs thy
God hath given,
But must, to make the terror of thee
more,
Trick thyself out in ghastly imageries
Of that which Life hath done with,
and the clod,
Less dull than thou, will hide with
mantling flowers
As if for pity ?' But he spake no word ;
Which set the horror higher : a
maiden swoon'd ;
The Lady Lyonors wrung her hands
and wept,
As doom'd to be the bride of Night
and Death ;
Sir Gareth's head prickled beneath
his helm ;
And ev'n Sir Lancelot thro' his warm
blood felt
Ice strike, and all that mark'd him
were aghast.

At once Sir Lancelot's charger
fiercely neigh'd
And Death's dark war-horse bounded
forward with him.
Then those that did not blink the
terror, saw
That Death was cast to ground, and
slowly rose.
But with one stroke Sir Gareth split
the skull.
Half fell to right and half to left and
lay.
Then with a stronger buffet he clove
the helm
As throughly as the skull; and out
from this
Issued the bright face of a blooming
boy
Fresh as a flower new-born, and cry-
ing, 'Knight,
Slay me not: my three brethren bad
me do it,
To make a horror all about the house,
And stay the world from Lady Lyon-
ors.
They never dream'd the passes would
be past.'
Answer'd Sir Gareth graciously to
one
Not many a moon his younger, 'My
fair child,
What madness made thee challenge
the chief knight
Of Arthur's hall?' 'Fair Sir, they
bad me do it.
They hate the King, and Lancelot, the
King's friend,
They hoped to slay him somewhere
on the stream,
They never dream'd the passes could
be past.'

Then sprang the happier day from
underground;
And Lady Lyonors and her house,
with dance
And revel and song, made merry over
Death,
As being after all their foolish fears
And horrors only proven a blooming
boy.
So large mirth lived and Gareth won
the quest.

And he that told the tale in older
times
Says that Sir Gareth wedded Lyonors,
But he, that told it later, says Lynette.

THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT.

THE brave Geraint, a knight of
Arthur's court,
A tributary prince of Devon, one
Of that great Order of the Table
Round,
Had married Enid, Yniol's only child,
And loved her, as he loved the light
of Heaven.
And as the light of Heaven varies,
now
At sunrise, now at sunset, now by
night
With moon and trembling stars, so
loved Geraint
To make her beauty vary day by day,
In crimsons and in purples and in
gems.
And Enid, but to please her husband's
eye,
Who first had found and loved her in
a state
Of broken fortunes, daily fronted him
In some fresh splendor; and the
Queen herself,
Grateful to Prince Geraint for service
done,
Loved her, and often with her own
white hands
Array'd and deck'd her, as the loveli-
est,
Next after her own self, in all the
court.
And Enid loved the Queen, and with
true heart
Adored her, as the stateliest and the
best
And loveliest of all women upon
earth.
And seeing them so tender and so
close,
Long in their common love rejoiced
Geraint.
But when a rumor rose about the
Queen,

Touching her guilty love for Lancelot,
Tho' yet there lived no proof, nor yet
was heard
The world's loud whisper breaking
into storm,
Not less Geraint believed it; and
there fell
A horror on him, lest his gentle wife,
Thro' that great tenderness for Guinevere,
Had suffer'd, or should suffer any
taint
In nature: wherefore going to the
King,
He made this pretext, that his princedom lay
Close on the borders of a territory,
Wherein were bandit earls, and caitiff
knights,
Assassins, and all flyers from the hand
Of justice, and whatever loathes a
law:
And therefore, till the King himself
should please
To cleanse this common sewer of all
his realm,
He craved a fair permission to depart,
And there defend his marches; and
the King
Mused for a little on his plea, but,
last,
Allowing it, the Prince and Enid
rode,
And fifty knights rode with them, to
the shores
Of Severn, and they past to their own
land;
Where, thinking, that if ever yet was
wife
True to her lord, mine shall be so to
me,
He compass'd her with sweet observances
And worship, never leaving her, and
grew
Forgetful of his promise to the King,
Forgetful of the falcon and the hunt,
Forgetful of the tilt and tournament,
Forgetful of his glory and his name,
Forgetful of his princedom and its
cares.
And this forgetfulness was hateful to
her.

And by and by the people, when they
met
In twos and threes, or fuller companies,
Began to scoff and jeer and babble of
him
As of a prince whose manhood was
all gone,
And molten down in mere uxoriousness.
And this she gather'd from the people's eyes:
This too the women who attired her
head,
To please her, dwelling on his boundless love,
Told Enid, and they sadden'd her the
more:
And day by day she thought to tell
Geraint,
But could not out of bashful delicacy;
While he that watch'd her sadden,
was the more
Suspicious that her nature had a taint.

At last, it chanced that on a summer
morn
(They sleeping each by either) the
new sun
Beat thro' the blindless casement of
the room,
And heated the strong warrior in his
dreams;
Who, moving, cast the coverlet aside,
And bared the knotted column of
his throat,
The massive square of his heroic
breast,
And arms on which the standing
muscle sloped,
As slopes a wild brook o'er a little
stone,
Running too vehemently to break
upon it.
And Enid woke and sat beside the
couch,
Admiring him, and thought within
herself,
Was ever man so grandly made as
he?
Then, like a shadow, past the people's
talk
And accusation of uxoriousness

Across her mind, and bowing over
him,
Low to her own heart piteously she
said:

'O noble breast and all-puissant
arms,
Am I the cause, I the poor cause that
men
Reproach you, saying all your force
is gone?
I *am* the cause, because I dare not
speak
And tell him what I think and what
they say.
And yet I hate that he should linger
here;
I cannot love my lord and not his
name.
Far liefer had I gird his harness on
him,
And ride with him to battle and stand
by,
And watch his mightful hand striking
great blows
At caiffes and at wrongers of the
world.
Far better were I laid in the dark
earth,
Not hearing any more his noble voice,
Not to be folded more in these dear
arms,
And darken'd from the high light in
his eyes,
Than that my lord thro' me should
suffer shame.
Am I so bold, and could I so stand
by,
And see my dear lord wounded in the
strife,
Or maybe pierced to death before
mine eyes,
And yet not dare to tell him what I
think,
And how men slur him, saying all his
force
Is melted into mere effeminacy?
O me, I fear that I am no true wife.'

Half inwardly, half audibly she
spoke,
And the strong passion in her made
her weep

True tears upon his broad and naked
breast,
And these awoke him, and by great
mischance
He heard but fragments of her later
words,
And that she fear'd she was not a true
wife.
And then he thought, 'In spite of all
my care,
For all my pains, poor man, for all my
pains,
She is not faithful to me, and I see
her
Weeping for some gay knight in
Arthur's hall.'
Then tho' he loved and revered
her too much
To dream she could be guilty of foul
act,
Right thro' his manful breast darted
the pang
That makes a man, in the sweet face
of her
Whom he loves most, lonely and
miserable.
At this he hurl'd his huge limbs out of
bed,
And shook his drowsy squire awake
and cried,
'My charger and her palfrey;' then
to her,
'I will ride forth into the wilderness;
For tho' it seems my spurs are yet to
win,
I have not fall'n so low as some
would wish.
And thou, put on thy worst and
meanest dress
And ride with me.' And Enid ask'd,
amazed,
'If Enid errs, let Enid learn her
fault.'
But he, 'I charge thee, ask not, but
obey.'
Then she bethought her of a faded
silk,
A faded mantle and a faded veil,
And moving toward a cedarn cabinet,
Wherein she kept them folded rever-
ently
With sprigs of summer laid between
the folds,

She took them, and array'd herself
therein,
Remembering when first he came on
her
Drest in that dress, and how he loved
her in it,
And all her foolish fears about the
dress,
And all his journey to her, as himself
Had told her, and their coming to the
court.

For Arthur on the Whitsuntide
before
Held court at old Caerleon upon Usk.
There on a day, he sitting high in hall,
Before him came a forester of Dean,
Wet from the woods, with notice of a
hart
Taller than all his fellows, milky-
white,
First seen that day: these things he
told the King.
Then the good King gave order to
let blow
His horns for hunting on the morrow-
morn.
And when the Queen petition'd for
his leave
To see the hunt, allow'd it easily.
So with the morning all the court
were gone.
But Guinevere lay late into the morn,
Lost in sweet dreams, and dreaming
of her love
For Lancelot, and forgetful of the
hunt;
But rose at last, a single maiden with
her,
Took horse, and forded Usk, and
gain'd the wood;
There, on a little knoll beside it,
stay'd
Waiting to hear the hounds; but
heard instead
A sudden sound of hoofs, for Prince
Geraint,
Late also, wearing neither hunting-
dress
Nor weapon, save a golden-hilted
brand,
Came quickly flashing thro' the shal-
low ford

Behind them, and so gallop'd up the
knoll.
A purple scarf, at either end whereof
There swung an apple of the purest
gold,
Sway'd round about him, as he
gallop'd up
To join them, glancing like a dragon-
fly
In summer suit and silks of holiday.
Low bow'd the tributary Prince, and
she,
Sweetly and stately, and with all
grace
Of womanhood and queenhood,
answer'd him:
'Late, late, Sir Prince,' she said,
'later than we!'
'Yea, noble Queen,' he answer'd,
'and so late
That I but come like you to see the
hunt,
Not join it.' 'Therefore wait with
me,' she said;
'For on this little knoll, if anywhere,
There is good chance that we shall
hear the hounds:
Here often they break covert at our
feet.'

And while they listen'd for the
distant hunt,
And chiefly for the baying of Cavall,
King Arthur's hound of deepest
mouth, there rode
Full slowly by a knight, lady, and
dwarf;
Whereof the dwarf lag'd latest, and
the knight
Had visor up, and show'd a youthful
face,
Imperious, and of haughtiest linea-
ments.
And Guinevere, not mindful of his face
In the King's hall, desired his name,
and sent
Her maiden to demand it of the
dwarf;
Who being vicious, old and irritable,
And doubling all his master's vice of
pride,
Made answer sharply that she should
not know.

'Then will I ask it of himself,' she said.
 'Nay, by my faith, thou shalt not,' cried the dwarf;
 'Thou art not worthy ev'n to speak of him;'
 And when she put her horse toward the knight,
 Struck at her with his whip, and she return'd
 Indignant to the Queen; whereat Geraint
 Exclaiming, 'Surely I will learn the name,'
 Made sharply to the dwarf, and ask'd it of him,
 Who answer'd as before; and when the Prince
 Had put his horse in motion toward the knight,
 Struck at him with his whip, and cut his cheek.
 The Prince's blood spirted upon the scarf,
 Dyeing it; and his quick, instinctive hand
 Caught at the hilt, as to abolish him:
 But he, from his exceeding manfulness
 And pure nobility of temperament,
 Wroth to be wroth at such a worm, refrain'd
 From ev'n a word, and so returning said:

'I will avenge this insult, noble Queen,
 Done in your maiden's person to yourself:
 And I will track this vermin to their earths:
 For tho' I ride unarm'd, I do not doubt
 To find, at some place I shall come at, arms
 On loan, or else for pledge; and, being found,
 Then will I fight him, and will break his pride,
 And on the third day will again be here,
 So that I be not fall'n in fight.
 Farewell.'

'Farewell, fair Prince,' answer'd the stately Queen.
 'Be prosperous in this journey, as in all;
 And may you light on all things that you love,
 And live to wed with her whom first you love:
 But ere you wed with any, bring your bride,
 And I, were she the daughter of a king,
 Yea, tho' she were a beggar from the hedge,
 Will clothe her for her bridals like the sun.'

And Prince Geraint, now thinking that he heard
 The noble hart at bay, now the far horn,
 A little vext at losing of the hunt,
 A little at the vile occasion, rode,
 By ups and downs, thro' many a grassy glade
 And valley, with fixt eye following the three.
 At last they issued from the world of wood,
 And climb'd upon a fair and even ridge,
 And show'd themselves against the sky, and sank.
 And thither came Geraint, and underneath
 Beheld the long street of a little town
 In a long valley, on one side whereof,
 White from the mason's hand, a fortress rose;
 And on one side a castle in decay,
 Beyond a bridge that spann'd a dry ravine:
 And out of town and valley came a noise
 As of a broad brook o'er a shingly bed
 Brawling, or like a clamor of the rooks
 At distance, ere they settle for the night.

And onward to the fortress rode the three,

And enter'd, and were lost behind the walls.

'So,' thought Geraint, 'I have track'd him to his earth.'

And down the long street riding wearily,

Found every hostel full, and every-where

Was hammer laid to hoof, and the hot hiss

And bustling whistle of the youth who scour'd

His master's armor; and of such a one

He ask'd, 'What means the tumult in the town?'

Who told him, scouring still, 'The sparrow-hawk!'

Then riding close behind an ancient churl,

Who, smitten by the dusty sloping beam,

Went sweating underneath a sack of corn,

Ask'd yet once more what meant the hubbub here?

Who answer'd gruffly, 'Ugh! the sparrow-hawk.'

Then riding further past an armorer's,

Who, with back turn'd, and bow'd above his work,

Sat riveting a helmet on his knee,

He put the self-same query, but the man

Not turning round, nor looking at him, said:

'Friend, he that labors for the sparrow-hawk

Has little time for idle questioners.'

Whereat Geraint flash'd into sudden spleen:

'A thousand pips eat up your sparrow-hawk!

Tits, wrens, and all wing'd nothings peck him dead!

Ye think the rustic cackle of your bourg

The murmur of the world! What is it to me?

O wretched set of sparrows, one and all,

Who pipe of nothing but of sparrow-hawks!

Speak, if ye be not like the rest, hawk-mad,

Where can I get me harborage for the night?

And arms, arms, arms to fight my enemy? Speak!'

Whereat the armorer turning all amazed

And seeing one so gay in purple silks,

Came forward with the helmet yet in hand

And answer'd, 'Pardon me, O stranger knight;

We hold a tourney here to-morrow morn,

And there is scanty time for half the work.

Arms? truth! I know not: all are wanted here.

Harborage? truth, good truth, I know not, save,

It may be, at Earl Yniol's, o'er the bridge

Yonder.' He spoke and fell to work again.

Then rode Geraint, a little spleenful yet,

Across the bridge that spann'd the dry ravine.

There musing sat the hoary-headed Earl,

(His dress a suit of fray'd magnificence,

Once fit for feasts of ceremony) and said:

'Whither, fair son?' to whom Geraint replied,

'O friend, I seek a harborage for the night.'

Then Yniol, 'Enter therefore and partake

The slender entertainment of a house

Once rich, now poor, but ever open-door'd.'

'Thanks, venerable friend,' replied Geraint;

'So that ye do not serve me sparrow-hawks

For supper, I will enter, I will eat

With all the passion of a twelve hours' fast.'

Then sigh'd and smiled the hoary-headed Earl,
And answer'd, 'Graver cause than yours is mine
To curse this hedgerow thief, the sparrow-hawk:
But in, go in; for save yourself desire it,
We will not touch upon him ev'n in jest.'

Then rode Geraint into the castle court,
His charger trampling many a prickly star
Of sprouted thistle on the broken stones.
He look'd and saw that all was ruinous.
Here stood a shatter'd archway plumed with fern;
And here had fall'n a great part of a tower,
Whole, like a crag that tumbles from the cliff,
And like a crag was gay with wilding flowers:
And high above a piece of turret stair,
Worn by the feet that now were silent, wound
Bare to the sun, and monstrous ivy-stems
Claspt the gray walls with hairy-fibred arms,
And suck'd the joining of the stones, and look'd
A knot, beneath, of snakes, aloft, a grove.

And while he waited in the castle court,
The voice of Enid, Yniol's daughter, rang
Clear thro' the open casement of the hall,
Singing; and as the sweet voice of a bird,
Heard by the lander in a lonely isle,
Moves him to think what kind of bird it is
That sings so delicately clear, and make
Conjecture of the plumage and the form;

So the sweet voice of Enid moved Geraint;
And made him like a man abroad at morn
When first the liquid note beloved of men
Comes flying over many a windy wave
To Britain, and in April suddenly
Breaks from a coppice gemm'd with green and red,
And he suspends his converse with a friend,
Or it may be the labor of his hands,
To think or say, 'There is the night-
ingale;
So fared it with Geraint, who thought and said,
'Here, by God's grace, is the one voice for me.'

It chanced the song that Enid sang was one
Of Fortune and her wheel, and Enid sang:

'Turn, Fortune, turn thy wheel and lower the proud;
Turn thy wild wheel thro' sunshine, storm, and cloud;
Thy wheel and thee we neither love nor hate.

'Turn, Fortune, turn thy wheel with smile or frown;
With that wild wheel we go not up or down;
Our hoard is little, but our hearts are great.

'Smile and we smile, the lords of many lands;
Frown and we smile, the lords of our own hands;
For man is man and master of his fate.

'Turn, turn thy wheel above the staring crowd;
Thy wheel and thou are shadows in the cloud;
Thy wheel and thee we neither love nor hate.'

'Hark, by the bird's song ye may
learn the nest,'
Said Yniol; 'enter quickly.' Enter-
ing then,
Right o'er a mount of newly-fallen
stones,
The dusky-rafter'd many-cobweb'd
hall,
He found an ancient dame in dim bro-
cade;
And near her, like a blossom vermeil-
white,
That lightly breaks a faded flower-
sheath,
Moved the fair Enid, all in faded
silk,
Her daughter. In a moment thought
Geraint,
'Here by God's rood is the one maid
for me.'
But none spake word except the hoary
Earl:
'Enid, the good knight's horse stands
in the court;
Take him to stall, and give him corn,
and then
Go to the town and buy us flesh and
wine;
And we will make us merry as we
may.
Our hoard is little, but our hearts are
great.'

He spake: the Prince, as Enid past
him, fain
To follow, strode a stride, but Yniol
caught
His purple scarf, and held, and said,
'Forbear!
Rest! the good house, tho' ruin'd, O
my son,
Endures not that her guest should
serve himself.'
And reverencing the custom of the
house
Geraint, from utter courtesy, forbore.

So Enid took his charger to the
stall;
And after went her way across the
bridge,
And reach'd the town, and while the
Prince and Earl

Yet spoke together, came again with
one,
A youth, that following with a costrel
bore
The means of goodly welcome, flesh
and wine.
And Enid brought sweet cakes to
make them cheer,
And in her veil enfolded, manchet
bread.
And then, because their hall must
also serve
For kitchen, boil'd the flesh, and
spread the board,
And stood behind, and waited on the
three.
And seeing her so sweet and service-
able,
Geraint had longing in him evermore
To stoop and kiss the tender little
thumb,
That crost the trencher as she laid it
down:
But after all had eaten, then Geraint,
For now the wine made summer in
his veins,
Let his eye rove in following, or rest
On Enid at her lowly handmaid-work,
Now here, now there, about the
dusky hall;
Then suddenly address the hoary
Earl:

'Fair Host and Earl, I pray your
courtesy;
This sparrow-hawk, what is he? tell
me of him.
His name? but no, good faith, I will
not have it:
For if he be the knight whom late
I saw
Ride into that new fortress by your
town,
White from the mason's hand, then
have I sworn
From his own lips to have it—I am
Geraint
Of Devon—for this morning when the
Queen
Sent her own maiden to demand the
name,
His dwarf, a vicious under-shapen
thing,

Struck at her with his whip, and she
 return'd
 Indignant to the Queen; and then I
 swore
 That I would track this caitiff to his
 hold,
 And fight and break his pride, and
 have it of him.
 And all unarm'd I rode, and thought
 to find
 Arms in your town, where all the men
 are mad;
 They take the rustic murmur of their
 bourg
 For the great wave that echoes round
 the world;
 They would not hear me speak: but
 if ye know
 Where I can light on arms, or if your-
 self
 Should have them, tell me, seeing I
 have sworn
 That I will break his pride and learn
 his name,
 Avenging this great insult done the
 Queen.'

Then cried Earl Yniol, 'Art thou he
 indeed,
 Geraint, a name far-sounded among
 men
 For noble deeds? and truly I, when
 first
 I saw you moving by me on the
 bridge,
 Felt ye were somewhat, yea, and by
 your state
 And presence might have guess'd you
 one of those
 That eat in Arthur's hall at Came-
 lot.
 Nor speak I now from foolish flat-
 tery;
 For this dear child hath often heard
 me praise
 Your feats of arms, and often when I
 paused
 Hath ask'd again, and ever loved to
 hear;
 So grateful is the noise of noble
 deeds
 To noble hearts who see but acts of
 wrong:

O never yet had woman such a pair
 Of suitors as this maiden; first
 Limours,
 A creature wholly given to brawls
 and wine,
 Drunk even when he woo'd; and be
 he dead
 I know not, but he past to the wild
 land.
 The second was your foe, the sparrow-
 hawk,
 My curse, my nephew—I will not let
 his name
 Slip from my lips if I can help it—
 he,
 When I that knew him fierce and
 turbulent
 Refused her to him, then his pride
 awoke;
 And since the proud man often is the
 mean,
 He sow'd a slander in the common
 ear,
 Affirming that his father left him
 gold,
 And in my charge, which was not
 render'd to him;
 Bribed with large promises the men
 who served
 About my person, the more easily
 Because my means were somewhat
 broken into
 Thro' open doors and hospitality;
 Raised my own town against me in
 the night
 Before my Enid's birthday, sack'd
 my house;
 From mine own earldom foully ousted
 me;
 Built that new fort to overawe my
 friends,
 For truly there are those who love me
 yet;
 And keeps me in this ruinous castle
 here,
 Where doubtless he would put me
 soon to death,
 But that his pride too much despises
 me:
 And I myself sometimes despise my-
 self;
 For I have let men be, and have their
 way;

Am much too gentle, have not used
my power :
Nor know I whether I be very base
Or very manful, whether very wise
Or very foolish ; only this I know,
That whatsoever evil happen to me,
I seem to suffer nothing heart or
limb,
But can endure it all most patiently.'

'Well said, true heart,' replied
Geraint, 'but arms,
That if the sparrow-hawk, this
nephew, fight
In next day's tourney I may break his
pride.'

And Yniol answer'd, 'Arms, in-
deed, but old
And rusty, old and rusty, Prince
Geraint,
Are mine, and therefore at thine ask-
ing, thine.
But in this tournament can no man
tilt,
Except the lady he loves best be
there.
Two forks are fixt into the meadow
ground,
And over these is placed a silver
wand,
And over that a golden sparrow-hawk,
The prize of beauty for the fairest
there.
And this, what knight soever be in
field
Lays claim to for the lady at his side,
And tilts with my good nephew
thereupon,
Who being apt at arms and big of
bone
Has ever won it for the lady with
him,
And toppling over all antagonism
Has earn'd himself the name of spar-
row-hawk.
But thou, that hast no lady, canst not
fight.'

To whom Geraint with eyes all
bright, replied,
Leaning a little toward him, 'Thy
leave !

Let *me* lay lance in rest, O noble
host,
For this dear child, because I never
saw,
Tho' having seen all beauties of our
time,
Nor can see elsewhere, anything so
fair.
And if I fall her name will yet re-
main
Untarnish'd as before ; but if I live,
So aid me Heaven when at mine
uttermost,
As I will make her truly my true
wife.'

Then, howsoever patient, Yniol's
heart
Danced in his bosom, seeing better
days.
And looking round he saw not Enid
there,
(Who hearing her own name had
stol'n away)
But that old dame, to whom full ten-
derly
And fondling all her hand in his
he said,
'Mother, a maiden is a tender thing,
And best by her that bore her under-
stood.
Go thou to rest, but ere thou go to
rest
Tell her, and prove her heart toward
the Prince.'

So spake the kindly-hearted Earl,
and she
With frequent smile and nod depart-
ing fount,
Half disarray'd as to her rest, the
girl ;
Whom first she kiss'd on either cheek,
and then
On either shining shoulder laid a hand,
And kept her off and gazed upon her
face,
And told her all their converse in the
hall,
Proving her heart : but never light and
shade
Cours'd one another more on open
ground

Beneath a troubled heaven, than red
and pale
Across the face of Enid hearing her;
While slowly falling as a scale that
falls,
When weight is added only grain by
grain,
Sank her sweet head upon her gentle
breast;
Nor did she lift an eye nor speak a
word,
Rapt in the fear and in the wonder of
it;
So moving without answer to her
rest
She found no rest, and ever fail'd to
draw
The quiet night into her blood, but lay
Contemplating her own unworthiness;
And when the pale and bloodless east
began
To quicken to the sun, arose, and
raised
Her mother too, and hand in hand
they moved
Down to the meadow where the jousts
were held,
And waited there for Yniol and
Geraint.

And thither came the twain, and
when Geraint
Beheld her first in field, awaiting him,
He felt, were she the prize of bodily
force,
Himself beyond the rest pushing could
move
The chair of Idris. Yniol's rusted
arms
Were on his princely person, but thro'
these
Princelike his bearing shone; and
errant knights
And ladies came, and by and by the
town
Flow'd in, and settling circled all the
lists.
And there they fixt the forks into the
ground,
And over these they placed the silver
wand.
And over that the golden sparrow-
hawk.

Then Yniol's nephew, after trumpet
blown,
Spake to the lady with him and pro-
claim'd,
'Advance and take, as fairest of the
fair,
What I these two years past have won
for thee,
The prize of beauty.' Loudly spake
the Prince,
'Forbear: there is a worthier,' and the
knight
With some surprise and thrice as
much disdain
Turn'd, and beheld the four, and all
his face
Glow'd like the heart of a great fire at
Yule,
So burnt he was with passion, crying
out,
'Do battle for it then,' no more; and
thrice
They clash'd together, and thrice they
brake their spears.
Then each, dishorsed and drawing,
lash'd at each
So often and with such blows, that all
the crowd
Wonder'd, and now and then from dis-
tant walls
There came a clapping as of phantom
hands.
So twice they fought, and twice they
breathed, and still
The dew of their great labor, and the
blood
Of their strong bodies, flowing, drain'd
their force.
But either's force was match'd till
Yniol's cry,
'Remember that great insult done the
Queen,'
Increased Geraint's, who heaved his
blade aloft,
And crack'd the helmet thro', and bit
the bone,
And fell'd him, and set foot upon his
breast,
And said, 'Thy name?' To whom
the fallen man
Made answer, groaning, 'Edyrn, son
of Nudd!
Ashamed am I that I should tell it thee.

My pride is broken: men have seen
my fall.'

'Then, Edyrn, son of Nudd,' replied
Geraint,

'These two things shalt thou do, or
else thou diest.

First, thou thyself, with damsel and
with dwarf,

Shalt ride to Arthur's court, and com-
ing there,

Crave pardon for that insult done the
Queen,

And shalt abide her judgment on it;
next,

Thou shalt give back their earldom to
thy kin.

These two things shalt thou do, or thou
shalt die.'

And Edyrn answer'd, 'These things
will I do,

For I have never yet been overthrown,
And thou hast overthrown me, and my
pride

Is broken down, for Enid sees my
fall!'

And rising up, he rode to Arthur's
court,

And there the Queen forgave him
easily.

And being young, he changed and
came to loathe

His crime of traitor, slowly drew him-
self

Bright from his old dark life, and fell
at last

In the great battle fighting for the
King.

But when the third day from the
hunting-morn

Made a low splendor in the world, and
wings

Moved in her ivy, Enid, for she lay
With her fair head in the dim-yellow
light,

Among the dancing shadows of the
birds,

Woke and bethought her of her prom-
ise given

No later than last eve to Prince
Geraint—

So bent he seem'd on going the third
day,

He would not leave her, till her prom-
ise given—

To ride with him this morning to the
court,

And there be made known to the
stately Queen,

And there be wedded with all cere-
mony.

At this she cast her eyes upon her
dress,

And thought it never yet had look'd so
mean.

For as a leaf in mid-November is
To what it was in mid-October, seem'd

The dress that now she look'd on to
the dress

She look'd on ere the coming of
Geraint.

And still she look'd, and still the ter-
ror grew

Of that strange bright and dreadful
thing, a court,

All staring at her in her faded silk:
And softly to her own sweet heart she
said:

'This noble prince who won our
earldom back,

So splendid in his acts and his attire,
Sweet heaven, how much I shall dis-
credit him!

Would he could tarry with us here
awhile,

But being so beholden to the Prince,
It were but little grace in any of us,

Bent as he seem'd on going this third
day,

To seek a second favor at his hands.
Yet if he could but tarry a day or
two,

Myself would work eye dim, and finger
lame,

Far liefer than so much discredit him.'

And Enid fell in longing for a dress
All branch'd and flower'd with gold, a
costly gift

Of her good mother, given her on the
night

Before her birthday, three sad years
ago,

That night of fire, when Edyrn sack'd
their house,

And scatter'd all they had to all the winds :
 For while the mother show'd it, and the two
 Were turning and admiring it, the work.
 To both appear'd so costly, rose a cry
 That Edyrn's men were on them, and they fled
 With little save the jewels they had on,
 Which being sold and sold had bought them bread :
 And Edyrn's men had caught them in their flight,
 And placed them in this ruin ; and she wish'd
 The Prince had found her in her ancient home ;
 Then let her fancy flit across the past,
 And roam the goodly places that she knew ;
 And last bethought her how she used to watch,
 Near that old home, a pool of golden carp ;
 And one was patch'd and blurr'd and lustreless
 Among his burnish'd brethren of the pool ;
 And half asleep she made comparison
 Of that and these to her own faded self
 And the gay court, and fell asleep again ;
 And dreamt herself was such a faded form
 Among her burnish'd sisters of the pool ;
 But this was in the garden of a king ;
 And tho' she lay dark in the pool, she knew
 That all was bright ; that all about were birds
 Of sunny plume in gilded trellis-work ;
 That all the turf was rich in plots that look'd
 Each like a garnet or a turkis in it ;
 And lords and ladies of the high court went
 In silver tissue talking things of state ;
 And children of the King in cloth of gold

Glanced at the doors or gambol'd down the walks ;
 And while she thought ' They will not see me,' came
 A stately queen whose name was Guinevere,
 And all the children in their cloth of gold
 Ran to her, crying, ' If we have fish at all
 Let them be gold ; and charge the gardeners now
 To pick the faded creature from the pool,
 And cast it on the mixen that it die.'
 And therewithal one came and seized on her,
 And Enid started waking, with her heart
 All overshadow'd by the foolish dream,
 And lo ! it was her mother grasping her
 To get her well awake ; and in her hand
 A suit of bright apparel, which she laid
 Flat on the couch, and spoke exultingly :

' See here, my child, how fresh the colors look,
 How fast they hold like colors of a shell
 That keeps the wear and polish of the wave.
 Why not ? It never yet was worn, I trow :
 Look on it, child, and tell me if ye know it.'

And Enid look'd, but all confused at first,
 Could scarce divide it from her foolish dream :
 Then suddenly she knew it and rejoiced,
 And answer'd, ' Yea, I know it ; your good gift,
 So sadly lost on that unhappy night ;
 Your own good gift !' ' Yea, surely,' said the dame,



"HE THRICE HAD SENT A HERALD TO THE GATES."—*Page 69.*

' And gladly given again this happy
morn.
For when the jousts were ended
yesterday,
Went Yniol thro' the town, and every-
where
He found the sack and plunder of our
house
All scatter'd thro' the houses of the
town;
And gave command that all which
once was ours
Should now be ours again : and yester-
eve,
While ye were talking sweetly with
your Prince,
Came one with this and laid it in my
hand,
For love or fear, or seeking favor of
us,
Because we have our earldom back
again.
And yester-eve I would not tell you of
it,
But kept it for a sweet surprise at
morn.
Yea, truly is it not a sweet surprise ?
For I myself unwillingly have worn
My faded suit, as you, my child, have
yours,
And howsoever patient, Yniol his.
Ah, dear, he took me from a goodly
house,
With store of rich apparel, sumptuous
fare,
And page, and maid, and squire, and
seneschal,
And pastime both of hawk and hound,
and all
That appertains to noble mainte-
nance.
Yea, and he brought me to a goodly
house;
But since our fortune swerved from
sun to shade,
And all thro' that young traitor, cruel
need
Constrain'd us, but a better time has
come;
So clothe yourself in this, that better
fits
Our mended fortunes and a Prince's
bride :

For tho' ye won the prize of fairest
fair,
And tho' I heard him call you fairest
fair,
Let never maiden think, however
fair,
She is not fairer in new clothes than
old.
And should some great court-lady say,
the Prince
Hath pick'd a ragged-robin from the
hedge,
And like a madman brought her to the
court,
Then were ye shamed, and, worse,
might shame the Prince
To whom we are beholden; but I
know,
When my dear child is set forth at her
best,
That neither court nor country, tho'
they sought
Thro' all the provinces like those of
old
That lighted on Queen Esther, has
her match.'

Here ceased the kindly mother out
of breath;
And Enid listen'd brightening as she
lay;
Then, as the white and glittering star
of morn
Parts from a bank of snow, and by
and by
Slips into golden cloud, the maiden
rose,
And left her maiden couch, and robed
herself,
Help'd by the mother's careful hand
and eye,
Without a mirror, in the gorgeous
gown;
Who, after, turn'd her daughter
round, and said,
She never yet had seen her half so
fair;
And call'd her like that maiden in the
tale,
Whom Gwydion made by glamor out
of flowers,
And sweeter than the bride of Cassive-
lann,

Flur, for whose love the Roman
 Cæsar first
 Invaded Britain, 'But we beat him
 back,
 As this great Prince invaded us, and
 we,
 Not beat him back, but welcomed him
 with joy.
 And I can scarcely ride with you to
 court,
 For old am I, and rough the ways and
 wild;
 But Yniol goes, and I full oft shall
 dream
 I see my princess as I see her now,
 Clothed with my gift, and gay among
 the gay.'

But while the women thus rejoiced,
 Geraint
 Woke where he slept in the high hall,
 and call'd
 For Enid, and when Yniol made
 report
 Of that good mother making Enid gay
 In such apparel as might well bescem
 His princess, or indeed the stately
 Queen,
 He answer'd: 'Earl, entreat her by
 my love,
 Albeit I give no reason but my wish,
 That she ride with me in her faded
 silk.'
 Yniol with that hard message went;
 it fell
 Like flaws in summer laying lusty
 corn:
 For Enid, all abash'd she knew not
 why,
 Dared not to glance at her good
 mother's face,
 But silently, in all obedience,
 Her mother silent too, nor helping her,
 Laid from her limbs the costly-
 broider'd gift,
 And robed them in her ancient suit
 again,
 And so descended. Never man re-
 joiced
 More than Geraint to greet her thus
 attired;
 And glancing all at once as keenly at
 her

As careful robins eye the delver's
 toil,
 Made her cheek burn and either eye-
 lid fall,
 But rested with her sweet face satis-
 fied;
 Then seeing cloud upon the mother's
 brow,
 Her by both hands he caught, and
 sweetly said,

'O my new mother, be not wroth
 or grieved
 At thy new son, for my petition to
 her.
 When late I left Caerleon, our great
 Queen,
 In words whose echo lasts, they were
 so sweet,
 Made promise, that whatever bride I
 brought,
 Herself would clothe her like the sun
 in Heaven.
 Thereafter, when I reach'd this ruin'd
 hall,
 Beholding one so bright in dark
 estate,
 I vow'd that could I gain her, our fair
 Queen,
 No hand but hers, should make your
 Enid burst
 Sunlike from cloud—and likewise
 thought perhaps,
 That service done so graciously would
 bind
 The two together; fain I would the
 two
 Should love each other: how can
 Enid find
 A nobler friend? Another thought
 was mine;
 I came among you here so suddenly,
 That tho' her gentle presence at the
 lists
 Might well have served for proof that
 I was loved,
 I doubted whether daughter's tender-
 ness,
 Or easy nature, might not let itself
 Be moulded by your wishes for her
 weal;
 Or whether some false sense in her
 own self

Of my contrasting brightness, over-
bore
Her fancy dwelling in this dusky hall;
And such a sense might make her
long for court
And all its perilous glories: and I
thought,
That could I someway prove such
force in her
Link'd with such love for me, that at
a word
(No reason given her) she could cast
aside
A splendor dear to women, new to
her,
And therefore dearer; or if not so
new.
Yet therefore tenfold dearer by the
power
Of intermitted usage; then I felt
That I could rest, a rock in ebbs and
flows,
Fixt on her faith. Now, therefore, I
do rest,
A prophet certain of my prophecy,
That never shadow of mistrust can
cross
Between us. Grant me pardon for
my thoughts:
And for my strange petition I will
make
Amends hereafter by some gaudy-day,
When your fair child shall wear your
costly gift
Beside your own warm hearth, with,
on her knees,
Who knows? another gift of the high
God,
Which, maybe, shall have learn'd to
'tisip you thanks.'

He spoke: the mother smiled, but
half in tears,
Then brought a mantle down and
wrapt her in it,
And clapt and kiss'd her, and they
rode away.

Now thrice that morning Guinevere
had climb'd
The giant tower, from whose high
crest, they say,
Men saw the goodly hills of Somerset,

And white sails flying on the yellow sea;
But not to goodly hill or yellow sea
Look'd the fair Queen, but up the
vale of Usk,
By the flat meadow, till she saw them
come;
And then descending met them at the
gates,
Embraced her with all welcome as a
friend,
And did her honor as the Prince's
bride,
And clothed her for her bridals like
the sun;
And all that week was old Caerleon
gay,
For by the hands of Dubric, the high
saint,
They twain were wedded with all
ceremony.

And this was on the last year's
Whitsuntide.
But Enid ever kept the faded silk,
Remembering how first he came on
her,
Drest in that dress, and how he loved
her in it,
And all her foolish fears about the
nress,
And all his journey toward her, as
himself
Had told her, and their coming to the
court.

And now this morning when he said
to her,
'Put on your worst and meanest
dress,' she found
And took it, and array'd herself there-
in.

GERAINT AND ENID.

O PURBLIND race of miserable men,
How many among us at this very
hour
Do forge a life-long trouble for our-
selves,
By taking true for false, or false for
true;

Here, thro' the feeble twilight of this
world
Groping, how many, until we pass and
reach
That other, where we see as we are
seen!

So fared it with Geraint, who issu-
ing forth
That morning, when they both had
got to horse,
Perhaps because he loved her passion-
ately,
And felt that tempest brooding round
his heart,
Which, if he spoke at all, would
break perforce
Upon a head so dear in thunder, said:
'Not at my side. I charge thee ride
before,

Ever a good way on before; and this
I charge thee, on thy duty as a wife,
Whatever happens, not to speak to
me,

No, not a word!' and Enid was
aghast;

And forth they rode, but scarce three
paces on,

When crying out, 'Effeminate as I am,
I will not fight my way with gilded
arms,

All shall be iron;' he loosed a mighty
purse,

Hung at his belt, and hurl'd it toward
the squire.

So the last sight that Enid had of
home

Was all the marble threshold flashing,
strown

With gold and scatter'd coinage, and
the squire

Chafing his shoulder: then he cried
again,

'To the wilds!' and Enid leading
down the tracks

Thro' which he bad her lead him on,
they past

The marches, and by bandit-haunted
holds,

Gray swamps and pools, waste places
of the hern,

And wildernesses, perilous paths, they
rode:

Round was their pace at first, but
slacken'd soon:

A stranger meeting them had surely
thought

They rode so slowly and they look'd
so pale,

That each had suffer'd some exceed-
ing wrong.

For he was ever saying to himself,
'O I that wasted time to tend upon
her,

To compass her with sweet observ-
ances,

To dress her beautifully and keep her
true'—

And there he broke the sentence in
his heart

Abruptly, as a man upon his tongue
May break it, when his passion
masters him.

And she was ever praying the sweet
heavens

To save her dear lord whole from any
wound.

And ever in her mind she cast about
For that unnoticed failing in herself,

Which made him look so cloudy and
so cold;

Till the great plover's human whistle
anazed

Her heart, and glancing round the
waste she fear'd

In every wavering brake an ambus-
cade.

Then thought again, 'If there be such
in me,

I might amend it by the grace of
Heaven,

If he would only speak and tell me
of it.'

But when the fourth part of the
day was gone,

Then Enid was aware of three tall
knights

On horseback, wholly arm'd, behind a
rock

In shadow, waiting for them, caitiffs
all;

And heard one crying to his fellows,
'Look,

Here comes a laggard hanging down
his head,

Who seems no bolder than a beaten
hound;
Come, we will slay him and will have
his horse
And armor, and his damsel shall be
ours.'

Then Enid ponder'd in her heart,
and said :
' I will go back a little to my lord,
And I will tell him all their caittiff
talk;
For, be he wroth even to slaying me,
Far liefer by his dear hand had I
die,
Than that my lord should suffer loss
or shame.'

Then she went back some paces of
return,
Met his foul frown timidly firm, and
said;
' My lord, I saw three bandits by the
rock
Waiting to fall on you, and heard
them boast
That they would slay you, and possess
your horse
And armor, and your damsel should
be theirs.'

He made a wrathful answer : ' Did
I wish
Your warning or your silence? one
command
I laid upon you, not to speak to me,
And thus ye keep it! Well then,
look—for now,
Whether ye wish me victory or de-
feat,
Long for my life, or hunger for my
death,
Yourself shall see my vigor is not
lost.'

Then Enid waited pale and sorrow-
ful,
And down upon him bare the bandit
three.
And at the midmost charging, Prince
Geraint
Drave the long spear a cubit thro'
his breast

And out beyond; and then against his
brace
Of comrades, each of whom had
broken on him
A lance that splinter'd like an icicle,
Swung from his brand a windy buffet
out
Once, twice, to right, to left, and
stunn'd the twain
Or slew them, and dismounting like
a man
That skins the wild beast after slay-
ing him,
Strip'd from the three dead wolves of
woman born
The three gay suits of armor which
they wore,
And let the bodies lie, but bound
the suits
Of armor on their horses, each on each,
And tied the bridle-reins of all the
three
Together, and said to her, ' drive them
on
Before you;' and she drove them
thro' the waste.

He follow'd nearer: ruth began to
work
Against his anger in him, while he
watch'd
The being he loved best in all the
world,
With difficulty in mild obedience
Driving them on: he fain had spoken
to her,
And loosed in words of sudden fire
the wrath
And smoulder'd wrong that burnt him
all within;
But evermore it seem'd an easier
thing
At once without remorse to strike
her dead,
Than to cry ' Halt,' and to her own
bright face
Accuse her of the least immodesty:
And thus tongue-tied, it made him
wroth the more
That she *could* speak whom his own
ear had heard
Call herself false: and suffering thus
he made

Minutes an age : but in scarce longer
time

Than at Caerleon the full-tided Usk,
Before he turn to fall seaward again,
Pauses, did Enid, keeping watch,
behold

In the first shallow shade of a deep
wood,

Before a gloom of stubborn-shafted
oaks,

Three other horsemen waiting, wholly
arm'd,

Whereof one seem'd far larger than
her lord,

And shook her pulses, crying, ' Look,
a prize !

Three horses and three goodly suits
of arms,

And all in charge of whom ? a girl :
set on.'

' Nay,' said the second, ' yonder comes
a knight.'

The third, ' A craven ; how he hangs
his head.'

The giant answer'd merrily, ' Yea,
but one ?

Wait here, and when he passes fall
upon him.'

And Enid ponder'd in her heart and
said,

' I will abide the coming of my lord,
And I will tell him all their villainy.

My lord is weary with the fight before,
And they will fall upon him un-
wares.

I needs must disobey him for his
good ;

How should I dare obey him to his
harm ?

Needs must I speak, and tho' he kill
me for it,

I save a life dearer to me than mine.'

And she abode his coming, and
said to him

With timid firmness, ' Have I leave
to speak ?'

He said, ' Ye take it, speaking,' and
she spoke.

' There lurk three villains yonder in
the wood,

And each of them is wholly arm'd,
and one

Is larger-limb'd than you are, and
they say

That they will fall upon you while
ye pass.'

To which he flung a wrathful
answer back :

' And if there were an hundred in the
wood,

And every man were larger-limb'd
than I,

And all at once should sally out upon
me,

I swear it would not ruffle me so
much

As you that not obey me. Stand
aside,

And if I fall, cleave to the better
man.'

And Enid stood aside to wait the
event,

Not dare to watch the combat, only
breathe

Short fits of prayer, at every stroke a
breath.

And he, she dreaded most, bare down
upon him.

Aim'd at the helm, his lance err'd ;
but Geraint's,

A little in the late encounter strain'd,
Struck thro' the bulky bandit's corse-
let home,

And then brake short, and down his
enemy roll'd,

And there lay still ; as he that tells
the tale

Saw once a great piece of a promon-
tory,

That had a sapling growing on it,
slide

From the long shore-cliff's windy walls
to the beach,

And there lie still, and yet the sap-
ling grew :

So lay the man transfixt. His craven
pair

Of comrades making slower at the
Prince,

When now they saw their bulwark
fallen, stood ;

On whom the victor, to confound them
more,
Spurr'd with his terrible war-cry; for
as one,
That listens near a torrent mountain-
brook,
All thro' the crash of the near cata-
ract hears
The drumming thunder of the huger fall
At distance, were the soldiers wont to
hear
His voice in battle, and be kindled by it,
And foemen scared, like that false
pair who turn'd
Flying, but, overtaken, died the death
Themselves had wrought on many an
innocent.

Thereon Geraint, dismounting,
pick'd the lance
That pleased him best, and drew from
those dead wolves
Their three gay suits of armor, each
from each,
And bound them on their horses, each
on each,
And tied the bridle-reins of all the
three
Together, and said to her, 'Drive
them on
Before you,' and she drove them thro'
the wood.

He follow'd nearer still: the pain
she had
To keep them in the wild ways of the
wood,
Two sets of three laden with jingling
arms,
Together, served a little to disedge
The sharpness of that pain about her
heart:
And they themselves, like creatures
gently born
But into bad hands fall'n, and now so
long
By bandits groom'd, prick'd their light
ears, and felt
Her low firm voice and tender govern-
ment.

So thro' the green gloom of the
wood they past,

And issuing under open heavens
beheld
A little town with towers, upon a rock,
And close beneath, a meadow gemlike
chased
In the brown wild, and mowers mow-
ing in it:
And down a rocky pathway from the
place
There came a fair-hair'd youth, that
in his hand
Bare victual for the mowers: and Ger-
aint
Had ruth again on Enid looking pale:
Then, moving downward to the
meadow ground,
He, when the fair-hair'd youth came
by him, said,
'Friend, let her eat; the damsel is so
faint.'
'Yea, willingly,' replied the youth;
'and thou,
My lord, eat also, tho' the fare is
coarse,
And only meet for mowers;' then set
down
His basket, and dismounting on the
sward
They let the horses graze, and ate
themselves.
And Enid took a little delicately,
Less having stomach for it than desire
To close with her lord's pleasure;
but Geraint
Ate all the mowers' victual unawares,
And when he found all empty, was
amazed;
And 'Boy,' said he, 'I have eaten all,
but take
A horse and arms for guerdon; choose
the best.'
He, reddening in extremity of
delight,
'My lord, you overpay me fifty-fold.'
'Ye will be all the wealthier,' cried
the Prince.
'I take it as free gift, then,' said the
boy,
'Not guerdon; for myself can easily,
While your good damsel rests, return,
and fetch
Fresh victual for these mowers of our
Earl;

For these are his, and all the field is
his,
And I myself am his; and I will tell
him
How great a man thou art: he loves
to know
When men of mark are in his terri-
tory:
And he will have thee to his palace
here,
And serve thee costlier than with
mowers' fare.'

Then said Geraint, 'I wish no bet-
ter fare:
I never ate with angrier appetite
Than when I left your mowers dinner-
less.
And into no Earl's palace will I go.
I know, God knows, too much of
palaces!
And if he want me, let him come to me.
But hire us some fair chamber for the
night,
And stalling for the horses, and
return
With victual for these men, and let
us know.'

'Yea, my kind lord,' said the glad
youth, and went,
Held his head high, and thought him-
self a knight,
And up the rocky pathway disappear'd,
Leading the horse, and they were left
alone.

But when the Prince had brought
his errant eyes
Home from the rock, sideways he let
them glance
At Enid, where she droopt: his own
false doom,
That shadow of mistrust should never
cross
Betwixt them, came upon him, and he
sigh'd;
Then with another humorous ruth re-
mark'd
The lusty mowers laboring dinnerless,
And watch'd the sun blaze on the
turning scythe,
And after nodded sleepily in the heat.

But she, remembering her old ruin'd
hall,
And all the windy clamor of the daws
About her hollow turret, pluck'd the
grass
There growing longest by the meadow's
edge,
And into many a listless annulet,
Now over, now beneath her marriage
ring,
Wove and unwove it, till the boy
return'd
And told them of a chamber, and
they went;
Where, after saying to her, 'If ye will,
Call for the woman of the house,' to
which
She answer'd, 'Thanks, my lord;'
the two remain'd
Apart by all the chamber's width, and
mute
As creatures voiceless thro' the fault
of birth,
Or two wild men supporters of a
shield,
Painted, who stare at open space, nor
glance
The one at other, parted by the shield.

On a sudden, many a voice along
the street,
And heel against the pavement echo-
ing, burst
Their drowse; and either started
while the door,
Push'd from without, drave backward
to the wall,
And midmost of a rout of roisterers,
Femininely fair and dissolutely pale,
Her suitor in old years before Geraint,
Enter'd, the wild lord of the place,
Limours.
He moving up with pliant courtliness,
Greeted Geraint full face, but stealth-
ily,
In the mid-warmth of welcome and
graspt hand,
Found Enid with the corner of his eye,
And knew her sitting sad and solitary.
Then cried Geraint for wine and
goodly cheer
To feed the sudden guest, and sump-
tuously

According to his fashion, bad the host
Call in what men soever were his
friends,
And feast with these in honor of their
Earl;
'And care not for the cost; the cost is
mine.'

And wine and food were brought,
and Earl Limours
Drank till he jested with all ease, and
told
Free tales, and took the word and
play'd upon it,
And made it of two colors; for his
talk,
When wine and free companions
kindled him,
Was wont to glance and sparkle like
a gem
Of fifty facets; thus he moved the
Prince
To laughter and his comrades to
applause.
Then, when the Prince was merry,
ask'd Limours,
'Your leave, my lord, to cross the
room, and speak
To your good damsel there who sits
apart,
And seems so lonely?' 'My free
leave,' he said;
'Get her to speak: she doth not speak
to me.'
Then rose Limours, and looking at
his feet,
Like him who tries the bridge he
fears may fail,
Crost and came near, lifted adoring
eyes,
Bow'd at her side and utter'd whisper-
ingly:

'Enid, the pilot star of my lone life,
Enid, my early and my only love,
Enid, the loss of whom hath turn'd
me wild—
What chance is this? how is it I see
you here?
Ye are in my power at last, are in my
power.
Yet fear me not: I call mine own
self wild,

But keep a touch of sweet civility
Here in the heart of waste and wilder-
ness.
I thought, but that your father came
between,
In former days you saw me favorably.
And if it were so do not keep it
back:
Make me a little happier: let me
know it:
Owe you me nothing for a life half-
lost?
Yea, yea, the whole dear debt of all
you are.
And, Enid, you and he, I see with
joy,
Ye sit apart, you do not speak to him,
You come with no attendance, page
or maid,
To serve you—doth he love you as of
old?
For, call it lovers' quarrels, yet I
know
Tho' men may bicker with the things
they love,
They would not make them laughable
in all eyes,
Not while they loved them; and
your wretched dress,
A wretched insult on you, dumbly
speaks
Your story, that this man loves you
no more.
Your beauty is no beauty to him now:
A common chance—right well I know
it—pall'd—
For I know men: nor will ye win
him back,
For the man's love once gone never
returns.
But here is one who loves you as of old;
With more exceeding passion than of
old:
Good, speak the word: my followers
ring him round:
He sits unarm'd; I hold a finger up;
They understand: nay; I do not
mean blood:
Nor need ye look so scared at what I
say:
My malice is no deeper than a moat,
No stronger than a wall: there is the
keep;

He shall not cross us more; speak
but the word:
Or speak it not; but then by Him that
made me
The one true lover whom you ever
own'd,
I will make use of all the power I
have.
O pardon me! the madness of that
hour,
When first I parted from thee, moves
me yet.

At this the tender sound of his own
voice
And sweet self-pity, or the fancy of it,
Made his eye moist; but Enid fear'd
his eyes,
Moist as they were, wine-heated from
the feast;
And answer'd with such craft as
women use,
Guilty or guiltless, to stave off a
chance
That breaks upon them perilously,
and said:

'Earl, if you love me as in former
years,
And do not practise on me, come
with morn,
And snatch me from him as by vio-
lence;
Leave me to-night: I am weary to
the death.'

Low at leave-taking, with his brand-
ish'd plume
Brushing his instep, bow'd the all-
amorous Earl,
And the stout Prince bad him a loud
good-night.
He moving homeward babbled to his
men,
How Enid never loved a man but
him,
Nor cared a broken egg-shell for her
lord.

But Enid left alone with Prince Ger-
aint,
Debating his command of silence
given,

And that she now perforce must vio-
late it,
Held commune with herself, and
while she held
He fell asleep, and Enid had no
heart
To wake him, but hung o'er him,
wholly pleased
To find him yet unwounded after
fight,
And hear him breathing low and
equally.
Anon she rose, and stepping lightly,
heap'd
The pieces of his armor in one place,
All to be there against a sudden
need;
Then dozed awhile herself, but over-
toil'd
By that day's grief and travel, ever-
more
Seem'd catching at a rootless thorn,
and then
Went slipping down horrible preci-
pices,
And strongly striking out her limbs
awoke;
Then thought she heard the wild Earl
at the door,
With all his rout of random followers,
Sound on a dreadful trumpet, sum-
moning her;
Which was the red cock shouting to
the light,
As the gray dawn stole o'er the dewy
world,
And glimmer'd on his armor in the
room.
And once again she rose to look at
it,
But touch'd it unawares: jangling,
the casque
Fell, and he started up and stared at
her.
Then breaking his command of silence
given,
She told him all that Earl Limours
had said,
Except the passage that he loved her
not;
Nor left untold the craft herself had
used;
But ended with apology so sweet,

Low-spoken, and of so few words,
and seem'd
So justified by that necessity,
That tho' he thought 'was it for
him she wept
In Devon?' he but gave a wrathful
groan,
Saying, 'Your sweet faces make good
fellows fools
And traitors. Call the host and bid
him bring
Charger and palfrey.' So she glided
out
Among the heavy breathings of the
house,
And like a household Spirit at the
walls
Beat, till she woke the sleepers, and
return'd:
Then tending her rough lord, tho' all
unask'd,
In silence, did him service as a
squire;
Till issuing arm'd he found the host
and cried,
'Thy reckoning, friend?' and ere he
learnt it, 'Take
Five horses and their armors;' and
the host
Suddenly honest, answer'd in amaze,
'My lord, I scarce have spent the
worth of one!'
'Ye will be all the wealthier,' said the
Prince,
And then to Enid, 'Forward! and
to-day
I charge you, Enid, more especially,
What thing soever ye may hear, or
see,
Or fancy (tho' I count it of small use
To charge you) that ye speak not but
obey.'

And Enid answer'd, 'Yea, my lord,
I know
Your wish, and would obey; but rid-
ing first,
I hear the violent threats you do not
hear,
I see the danger which you cannot
see:
Then not to give you warning, that
seems hard;

Almost beyond me: yet I would
obey.'
'Yea so,' said he, 'do it: be not too
wise;
Seeing that ye are wedded to a man,
Not all mismated with a yawning
clown,
But one with arms to guard his head
and yours,
With eyes to find you out however
far,
And ears to hear you even in his
dreams.'

With that he turn'd and look'd as
keenly at her
As careful robins eye the delver's toil;
And that within her, which a wanton
fool,
Or hasty judger would have call'd her
guilt,
Made her cheek burn and either eye-
lid fall.
And Geraint look'd and was not satis-
fied.

Then forward by a way which,
beaten broad,
Led from the territory of false
Limours
To the waste earldom of another earl,
Doorm, whom his shaking vassals
call'd the Bull,
Went Enid with her sullen follower
on.
Once she look'd back, and when she
saw him ride
More near by many a rood than yes-
ter-morn,
It wellnigh made her cheerful; till
Geraint
Waving an angry hand as who should
say
'Ye watch me,' sadden'd all her heart
again.
But while the sun yet beat a dewy
blade
The sound of many a heavily-galloping
hoof
Smote on her ear, and turning round
she saw
Dust, and the points of lances bicker
in it.

Then not to disobey her lord's behest,
 And yet to give him warning, for he
 rode
 As if he heard not, moving back she
 held
 Her finger up, and pointed to the
 dust.
 At which the warrior in his obstinacy,
 Because she kept the letter of his
 word,
 Was in a manner pleased, and turn-
 ing, stood.
 And in a moment after, wild Limours,
 Borne on a black horse, like a thunder-
 cloud
 Whose skirts are loosen'd by the
 breaking storm,
 Half ridden off with by the thing he
 rode,
 And all in passion uttering a dry
 shriek,
 Dash'd on Geraint, who closed with
 him, and bore
 Down by the length of lance and arm
 beyond
 The crupper, and so left him stunn'd
 or dead,
 And overthrew the next that follow'd
 him,
 And blindly rush'd on all the rout
 behind.
 But at the flash and motion of the man
 They vanish'd panic-stricken, like a
 shoal
 Of darting fish, that on a summer
 morn
 Adown the crystal dykes at Camelot
 Come slipping o'er their shadows on
 the sand,
 But if a man who stands upon the
 brink
 But lift a shining hand against the
 sun,
 There is not left the twinkle of a fin
 Betwixt the cressy islets white in
 flower';
 So, scared but at the motion of the
 man,
 Fled all the boon companions of the
 Earl,
 And left him lying in the public way;
 So vanish friendships only made in
 wine.

Then like a stormy sunlight smiled
 Geraint,
 Who saw the chargers of the two that
 fell
 Start from their fallen lords, and
 wildly fly,
 Mixt with the flyers. 'Horse and
 man,' he said,
 'All of one mind and all right-honest
 friends!
 Not a hoof left: and I methinks till
 now
 Was honest—paid with horses and
 with arms;
 I cannot steal or plunder, nor nor beg:
 And so what say ye, shall we strip
 him there
 Your lover? has your palfrey heart
 enough
 To bear his armor? shall we fast, or
 dine?
 No?—then do thou, being right hon-
 est, pray
 That we may meet the horsemen of
 Earl Doorm,
 I too would still be honest.' Thus he
 said:
 And sadly gazing on her bridle-reins,
 And answering not one word, she led
 the way.

But as a man to whom a dreadful
 loss
 Falls in a far land and he knows it not,
 But coming back he learns it, and the
 loss
 So pains him that he sickens nigh to
 death;
 So fared it with Geraint, who being
 prick'd
 In combat with the follower of
 Limours,
 Bled underneath his armor secretly,
 And so rode on, nor told his gentle
 wife
 What ail'd him, hardly knowing it
 himself,
 Till his eye darken'd and his helmet
 wagg'd;
 And at a sudden swerving of the
 road,
 Tho' happily down on a bank of
 grass,

The Prince, without a word, from his horse fell.

And Enid heard the clashing of his fall,
Suddenly came, and at his side all pale
Dismounting, loosed the fastenings of his arms,
Nor let her true hand falter, nor blue eye
Moisten, till she had lighted on his wound,
And tearing off her veil of faded silk
Had bared her forehead to the blistering sun,
And swathed the hurt that drain'd her dear lord's life.
Then after all was done that hand could do,
She rested, and her desolation came
Upon her, and she wept beside the way.

And many past, but none regarded her,
For in that realm of lawless turbulence,
A woman weeping for her murder'd mate
Was cared as much for as a summer shower:
One took him for a victim of Earl Doorm,
Nor dared to waste a perilous pity on him:
Another hurrying past, a man-at-arms,
Rode on a mission to the bandit Earl;
Half whistling and half singing a coarse song,
He drove the dust against her veiless eyes:
Another, flying from the wrath of Doorm
Before an ever-fancied arrow, made
The long way smoke beneath him in his fear;
At which her palfrey whinnying lifted heel,
And scour'd into the coppices and was lost,
While the great charger stood, grieved like a man.

But at the point of noon the huge Earl Doorm,
Broad-faced with under-fringe of russet beard,
Bound on a foray, rolling eyes of prey,
Came riding with a hundred lances up;
But ere he came, like one that hails a ship,
Cried out with a big voice, 'What, is he dead?'
'No, no, not dead!' she answer'd in all haste.
'Would some of your kind people take him up,
And bear him hence out of this cruel sun?
Most sure am I, quite sure, he is not dead.'

Then said Earl Doorm: 'Well, if he be not dead,
Why wail ye for him thus? ye seem a child.
And be he dead, I count you for a fool;
Your wailing will not quicken him: dead or not,
Ye mar a comely face with idiot tears.
Yet, since the face *is* comely—some of you,
Here, take him up, and bear him to our hall:
An if he live, we will have him of our band;
And if he die, why earth has earth enough
To hide him. See ye take the charger too,
A noble one.'

He spake, and past away,
But left two brawny spearmen, who advanced,
Each growling like a dog, when his good bone
Seems to be pluck'd at by the village boys
Who love to vex him eating, and he fears
To lose his bone, and lays his foot upon it,
Gnawing and growling: so the ruffians growl'd,

Fearing to lose, and all for a dead
man,
Their chance of booty from the morn-
ing's raid,
Yet raised and laid him on a litter-
bier,
Such as they brought upon their
forays out
For those that might be wounded;
laid him on it
All in the hollow of his shield, and
took
And bore him to the naked hall of
Doorm,
(His gentle charger following him
unled)
And cast him and the bier in which he
lay
Down on an oaken settle in the hall,
And then departed, hot in haste to
join
Their luckier mates, but growling as
before,
And cursing their lost time, and the
dead man,
And their own Earl, and their own
souls, and her.
They might as well have blest her:
she was deaf
To blessing or to cursing save from one.

So for long hours sat Enid by her
lord,
There in the naked hall, propping his
head,
And chafing his pale hands, and call-
ing to him.
Till at the last he waken'd from his
swoon,
And found his own dear bride prop-
ping his head,
And chafing his faint hands, and call-
ing to him;
And felt the warm tears falling on his
face;
And said to his own heart, 'She
weeps for me:'
And yet lay still, and feign'd himself
as dead,
That he might prove her to the utter-
most,
And say to his own heart, 'She weeps
for me.'

But in the falling afternoon return'd
The huge Earl Doorm with plunder
to the hall.
His lusty spearmen follow'd him with
noise:
Each hurling down a heap of things
that rang
Against the pavement, cast his lance
aside,
And doff'd his helm: and then there
flutter'd in,
Half-bold, half-frighted, with dilated
eyes,
A tribe of women, dress'd in many
hues,
And mingled with the spearmen:
and Earl Doorm
Struck with a knife's haft hard against
the board,
And call'd for flesh and wine to feed
his spears.
And men brought in whole hogs and
quarter beeves,
And all the hall was dim with steam
of flesh:
And none spake word, but all sat
down at once,
And ate with tumult in the naked hall,
Feeding like horses when you hear
them feed;
Till Enid shrank far back into herself,
To shun the wild ways of the lawless
tribe.
But when Earl Doorm had eaten all
he would,
He roll'd his eyes about the hall, and
found
A damsel drooping in a corner of it.
Then he remember'd her, and how
she wept;
And out of her there came a power
upon him;
And rising on the sudden he said,
'Eat!
I never yet beheld a thing so pale.
God's curse, it makes me mad to see
you weep.
Eat! Look yourself. Good luck had
your good man,
For were I dead who is it would weep
for me?
Sweet lady, never since I first drew
breath

Have I beheld a lily like yourself.
And so there lived some color in
your cheek,
There is not one among my gentle-
women
Were fit to wear your slipper for a
glove.
But listen to me, and by me be ruled,
And I will do the thing I have not
done,
For ye shall share my earldom with
me, girl,
And we will live like two birds in one
nest,
And I will fetch you forage from all
fields,
For I compel all crea'tures to my will.'

He spoke: the brawny spearman
let his cheek
Bulge with the unswallow'd piece, and
turning stared;
While some, whose souls the old ser-
pent long had drawn
Down, as the worm draws in the
wither'd leaf
And makes it earth, hiss'd each at
other's ear
What shall not be recorded—women
they,
Women, or what had been those
gracious things,
But now desired the humbling of their
best,
Yea, would have help'd him to it:
and all at once
They hated her, who took no thought
of them,
But answer'd in low voice, her meek
head yet
Drooping, 'I pray you of your cour-
tesy,
He being as he is, to let me be.'

She spake so low he hardly heard
her speak,
But like a mighty patron, satisfied
With what himself had done so gra-
ciously,
Assumed that she had thank'd him,
adding, 'Yea,
Eat and be glad, for I account you
mine.'

She answer'd meekly, 'How should
I be glad
Henceforth in all the world at any-
thing,
Until my lord arise and look upon
me?'

Here the huge Earl cried out upon
her talk,
As all but empty heart and weariness
And sickly nothing; suddenly seized
on her,
And bare her by main violence to the
board,
And thrust the dish before her, crying,
'Eat.'

'No, no,' said Enid, vext, 'I will
not eat
Till yonder man upon the bier arise,
And eat with me.' 'Drink, then,' he
answer'd. 'Here!'
(And fill'd a horn with wine and held
it to her.)
'Lo! I, myself, when flush'd with
fight, or hot,
God's curse, with anger—often I my-
self,
Before I well have drunken, scarce
can eat:
Drink therefore and the wine will
change your will.'

'Not so,' she cried, 'by Heaven, I
will not drink
Till my dear lord arise and bid me do
it,
And drink with me; and if he rise no
more,
I will not look at wine until I die.'

At this he turn'd all red and paced
his hall,
Now gnaw'd his under, now his upper
lip,
And coming up close to her, said at
last:
'Girl, for I see ye scorn my courtesies,
Take warning: yonder man is surely
dead;
And I compel all creatures to my will.
Not eat nor drink? And wherefore
wait for one,

Who put your beauty to this flout and
 By dressing it in rags? Amazed am
 I,
 Beholding how ye butt against my
 wish,
 That I forbear you thus : cross me no
 more.

At least put off to please me this poor
 gown,
 This silken rag, this beggar-woman's
 weed :

I love that beauty should go beauti-
 fully :

For see ye not my gentlewomen here,
 How gay, how suited to the house of
 one

Who loves that beauty should go
 beautifully ?

Rise therefore ; robe yourself in this :
 obey.'

He spoke, and one among his gen-
 tle-women

Display'd a splendid silk of foreign
 loom,

Where like a shoaling sea the lovely
 blue

Play'd into green, and thicker down
 the front

With jewels than the sward with
 drops of dew,

When all night long a cloud clings to
 the hill,

And with the dawn ascending lets the
 day

Strike where it clung : so thickly shone
 the gems.

But Enid answer'd, harder to be
 moved

Than hardest tyrants in their day of
 power,

With life-long injuries burning una-
 venged,

And now their hour has come ; and
 Enid said :

'In this poor gown my dear lord
 found me first,

And loved me serving in my father's
 hall :

In this poor gown I rode with him to
 court,

And there the Queen array'd me like
 the sun :

In this poor gown he bad me clothe
 myself,

When now we rode upon this fatal
 quest

Of honor, where no honor can be
 gain'd :

And this poor gown I will not cast
 aside

Until himself arise a living man,
 And bid me cast it. I have griefs

enough :

Pray you be gentle, pray you let me
 be :

I never loved, can never love but
 him :

Yea, God, I pray you of your gentle-
 ness,

He being as he is, to let me be.'

Then strode the brute Earl up and
 down his hall,

And took his russet beard between
 his teeth ;

Last, coming up quite close, and in
 his mood

Crying, 'I count it of no more avail,
 Daine, to be gentle than ungente

with you ;

Take my salute,' unknightly with
 flat hand,

However lightly, smote her on the
 cheek.

Then Enid, in her utter helpless-
 ness,

And since she thought, 'He had not
 dared to do it,

Except he surely knew my lord was
 dead,'

Sent forth a sudden sharp and bitter
 cry,

As of a wild thing taken in a trap,
 Which sees the trapper coming thro'

the wood.

This heard Geraint, and grasping at
 his sword,

(It lay beside him in the hollow
 shield),

Made but a single bound, and with a
 sweep of it

Shore thro' the swarthy neck, and like
a ball
The russet-bearded head roll'd on the
floor.
So died Earl Doorm by him he
counted dead.
And all the men and women in the
hall
Rose when they saw the dead man
rise, and fled
Yelling as from a spectre, and the
two
Were left alone together, and he
said :

'Enid, I have used you worse than
that dead man ;
Done you more wrong : we both have
undergone
That trouble which has left me thrice
your own :
Henceforward I will rather die than
doubt.
And here I lay this penance on my-
self,
Not, tho' mine own ears heard you
yesternorn—
You thought me sleeping, but I heard
you say,
I heard you say, that you were no
true wife :
I swear I will not ask your meaning
in it :
I do believe yourself against yourself,
And will henceforward rather die
than doubt.'

And Enid could not say one tender
word,
She felt so blunt and stupid at the
heart :
She only pray'd him, 'Fly, they will
return
And slay you ; fly, your charger is
without,
My palfrey lost.' 'Then, Enid, shall
you ride
Behind me.' 'Yea,' said Enid, 'let
us go.'
And moving out they found the
stately horse,
Who now no more a vassal to the
thief,

But free to stretch his limbs in lawful
fight,
Neigh'd with all gladness as they
came, and stoop'd
With a low whinny toward the pair :
and she
Kiss'd the white star upon his noble
front,
Glad also ; then Geraint upon the
horse
Mounted, and reach'd a hand, and on
his foot
She set her own and climb'd ; he
turn'd his face
And kiss'd her climbing, and she
cast her arms
About him, and at once they rode
away.

And never yet, since high in Paradise
O'er the four rivers the first roses
blew,
Came purer pleasure unto mortal
kind
Than lived thro' her, who in that per-
ilous hour
Put hand to hand beneath her hus-
band's heart,
And felt him hers again : she did not
weep,
But o'er her meek eyes came a happy
mist
Like that which kept the heart of
Eden green
Before the useful trouble of the rain :
Yet not so misty were her meek blue
eyes
As not to see before them on the
path,
Right in the gateway of the bandit
bold,
A knight of Arthur's court, who laid
his lance
In rest, and made as if to fall upon
him.
Then, fearing for his hurt and loss of
blood,
She, with her mind all full of what
had chanced,
Shriek'd to the stranger 'Slay not a
dead man !'
'The voice of Enid,' said the knight ;
but she,

Beholding it was Edyrn son of
Nudd,
Was moved so much the more, and
shriek'd again,
'O cousin, slay not him who gave you
life.'
And Edyrn moving frankly forward
spake:
'My lord Geraint, I greet you with all
love;
I took you for a bandit knight of
Doorn;
And fear not, Enid, I should fall
upon him,
Who love you, Prince, with some-
thing of the love
Wherewith we love the Heaven that
chastens us.
For once when I was up so high in
pride
That I was halfway down the slope to
Hell,
By overthrowing me you threw me
higher.
Now, made a knight of Arthur's Table
Round,
And since I knew this Earl, when I
myself
Was half a bandit in my lawless
hour,
I come the mouthpiece of our King
to Doorn
(The King is close behind me) bidding
him
Disband himself, and scatter all his
powers,
Submit, and hear the judgment of the
King.'

'He hears the judgment of the
King of kings,'
Cried the wan Prince; 'and lo, the
powers of Doorn
Are scatter'd,' and he pointed to the
field,
Where, huddled here and there on
mound and knoll,
Were men and women staring and
aghast,
While some yet fled; and then he
plainlier told
How the huge Earl lay slain within
his hall.

But when the knight besought him,
'Follow me,
Prince, to the camp, and in the King's
own ear
Speak what has chanced; ye surely
have endured
Strange chances here alone;' that
other flush'd,
And hung his head, and halted in
reply,
Fearing the mild face of the blameless
King,
And after madness acted question
ask'd:
Till Edyrn crying, 'If ye will not go
To Arthur, then will Arthur come to
you,'
'Enough,' he said, 'I follow,' and they
went.
But Enid in their going had two fears,
One from the bandit scatter'd in the
field,
And one from Edyrn. Every now
and then,
When Edyrn rein'd his charger at her
side,
She shrank a little. In a hollow land,
From which old fires have broken,
men may fear
Fresh fire and ruin. He, perceiving,
said:

'Fair and dear cousin, you that
most had cause
To fear me, fear no longer, I am
changed.
Yourself were first the blameless
cause to make
My nature's prideful sparkle in the
blood
Break into furious flame; being re-
pulsed
By Yniol and yourself, I schemed and
wrought
Until I overturn'd him; then set up
(With one main purpose ever at my
heart)
My haughty jousts, and took a para-
mour;
Did her mock-honor as the fairest fair,
And, toppling over all antagonism,
So wax'd in pride, that I believed
myself

Unconquerable, for I was wellnigh
mad:
And, but for my main purpose in these
jousts,
I should have slain your father, seized
yourself.
I lived in hope that sometime you
would come
To these my lists with him whom
best you loved;
And there, poor cousin, with your
meek blue eyes,
The truest eyes that ever answer'd
Heaven,
Behold me overturn and trample on
him.
Then, had you cried, or knelt, or
pray'd to me,
I should not less have kill'd him.
And you came,—
But once you came,—and with your
own true eyes
Beheld the man you loved (I speak as
one
Speaks of a service done him) over-
throw
My proud self, and my purpose three
years old,
And set his foot upon me, and give
me life.
There was I broken down; there was
I saved:
Tho' thence I rode all-shamed, hating
the life
He gave me, meaning to be rid of it.
And all the penance the Queen laid
upon me
Was but to rest awhile within her
court;
Where first as sullen as a beast new-
caged,
And waiting to be treated like a wolf,
Because I knew my deeds were
known, I found,
Instead of scornful pity or pure scorn,
Such fine reserve and noble reticence,
Manners so kind, yet stately, such a
grace
Of tenderest courtesy, that I began
To glance behind me at my former
life,
And find that it had been the wolf's
indeed:

And oft I talk'd with Dubric, the high
saint,
Who, with mild heat of holy oratory,
Subdued me somewhat to that gentle-
ness,
Which, when it weds with manhood,
makes a man.
And you were often there about the
Queen,
But saw me not, or mark'd not if you
saw;
Nor did I care or dare to speak with
you,
But kept myself aloof till I was
changed;
And fear not, cousin; I am changed
indeed.'

He spoke, and Enid easily believed,
Like simple noble natures, credulous
Of what they long for, good in friend
or foe,
There most in those who most have
done them ill.
And when they reach'd the camp the
King himself
Advanced to greet them, and behold-
ing her
Tho' pale, yet happy, ask'd her not a
word,
But went apart with Edyrn, whom he
held
In converse for a little, and return'd,
And, gravely smiling, lifted her from
horse,
And kiss'd her with all pureness,
brotherlike,
And show'd an empty tent allotted her,
And glancing for a minute, till he saw
her
Pass into it, turn'd to the Prince, and
said:

'Prince, when of late ye pray'd me
for my leave
To move to your own land, and there
defend
Your marches, I was prick'd with
some reproof,
As one that let foul wrong stagnate
and be,
By having look'd too much thro' alien
eyes,

And wrought too long with delegated hands,
 Not used mine own : but now behold me come
 To cleanse this common sewer of all my realm,
 With Edyrn and with others : have ye look'd
 At Edyrn ? have ye seen how nobly changed ?
 This work of his is great and wonderful.
 His very face with change of heart is changed.
 The world will not believe a man repents :
 And this wise world of ours is mainly right.
 Full seldom doth a man repent, or use
 Both grace and will to pick the vicious quitch
 Of blood and custom wholly out of him,
 And make all clean, and plant himself afresh.
 Edyrn has done it, weeding all his heart
 As I will weed this land before I go.
 I, therefore, made him of our Table Round,
 Not rashly, but have proved him everyway
 One of our noblest, our most valorous,
 Sanest and most obedient : and indeed
 This work of Edyrn wrought upon himself
 After a life of violence, seems to me
 A thousand-fold more great and wonderful
 Than if some knight of mine, risking his life,
 My subject with my subjects under him,
 Should make an onslaught single on a realm
 Of robbers, tho' he slew them one by one,
 And were himself nigh wounded to the death.'

So spake the King ; low bow'd the Prince, and felt

His work was neither great nor wonderful,
 And past to Enid's tent ; and thither came
 The King's own leech to look into his hurt ;
 And Enid tended on him there ; and there
 Her constant motion round him, and the breath
 Of her sweet tendance hovering over him,
 Fill'd all the genial courses of his blood
 With deeper and with ever deeper love
 As the south-west that blowing Bala lake
 Fills all the sacred Dee. So past the days.

But while Geraint lay healing of his hurt,
 The blameless King went forth and cast his eyes
 On each of all whom Uther left in charge
 Long since, to guard the justice of the King :
 He look'd and found them wanting ; and as now
 Men weed the white horse on the Berkshire hills
 To keep him bright and clean as heretofore,
 He rooted out the slothful officer
 Or guilty, which for bribe had wink'd at wrong,
 And in their chairs set up a stronger race
 With hearts and hands, and sent a thousand men
 To till the wastes, and moving everywhere
 Clear'd the dark places and let in the law,
 And broke the bandit holds and cleansed the land.

Then, when Geraint was whole again, they past
 With Arthur to Caerleon upon Usk.
 There the great Queen once more embraced her friend,

And clothed her in apparel like the day.
 And tho' Geraint could never take again
 That comfort from their converse, which he took
 Before the Queen's fair name was breathed upon,
 He rested well content that all was well.
 Thence after tarrying for a space they rode,
 And fifty knights rode with them to the shores
 Of Severn, and they past to their own land.
 And there he kept the justice of the King
 So vigorously yet mildly, that all hearts
 Applauded, and the spiteful whisper died:
 And being ever foremost in the chase,
 And victor at the tilt and tournament,
 They call'd him the great Prince and man of men.
 But Enid, whom her ladies loved to call
 Enid the Fair, a grateful people named
 Enid the Good; and in their halls arose
 The cry of children, Enids and Geraints
 Of times to be; nor did he doubt her more,
 But rested in her féalty, till he crown'd
 A happy life with a fair death, and fell
 Against the heathen of the Northern Sea
 In battle, fighting for the blameless King.

BALIN AND BALAN.

PELLAM the King, who held and lost
 with Lot
 In that first war, and had his realm restored
 But render'd tributary, fail'd of late
 To send his tribute; wherefore
 Arthur call'd

His treasurer, one of many years, and spake,
 'Go thou with him and him and bring it to us,
 Lest we should set one truer on his throne.
 Man's word is God in man.'

His Baron said
 'We go but harken: there be two strange knights
 Who sit near Camelot at a fountain side,
 A mile beneath the forest, challenging
 And overthrowing every knight who comes.
 Wilt thou I undertake them as we pass,
 And send them to thee?

Arthur laugh'd upon him.
 'Old friend, too old to be so young, depart,
 Delay not thou for ought, but let them sit,
 Until they find a lustier than themselves.'

So these departed. Early, one fair dawn,
 The light-wing'd spirit of his youth return'd
 On Arthur's heart; he arm'd himself and went,
 So coming to the fountain-side beheld
 Balin and Balan sitting statuelike,
 Brethren, to right and left the spring,
 that down,
 From underneath a plume of lady-fern,
 Sang, and the sand danced at the bottom of it.
 And on the right of Balin Balin's horse
 Was fast beside an alder, on the left
 Of Balan Balan's near a poplartree.
 'Fair Sirs,' said Arthur, 'wherefore sit ye here?'
 Balin and Balan answer'd 'For the sake
 Of glory; we be mightier men than all
 In Arthur's court; that also have we proved;
 For 'whatsoever knight against us came

Or I or he have easily overthrown.'
 'I too,' said Arthur, 'am of Arthur's
 hall,
 But rather proven in his Paynim wars
 Than famous jousts; but see, or
 proven or not,
 Whether me likewise ye can over-
 throw.'
 And Arthur lightly smote the brethren
 down,
 And lightly so return'd, and no man
 knew.

Then Balin rose, and Balan, and
 beside
 The carolling water set themselves
 again,
 And spake no word until the shadow
 turn'd;
 When from the fringe of coppice
 round them burst
 A spangled pursuivant, and crying
 'Sirs,
 Rise, follow! ye be sent for by the
 King,'
 They follow'd; whom when Arthur
 seeing ask'd
 'Tell me your names; why sat ye by
 the well?'

Balin the stillness of a minute broke
 Saying 'An unmelodious name to thee,
 Balin, "the Savage"—that addition
 thine—

My brother and my better, this man
 here,

Balan. I smote upon the naked skull
 A thrall of thine in open hall, my
 hand

Was gauntleted, half slew him; for I
 heard

He had spoken evil of me; thy just
 wrath

Sent me a three-years' exile from thine
 eyes.

I have not lived my life delightfully:
 For I that did that violence to thy
 thrall,

Had often wrought some fury on my-
 self,

Saving for Balan: those three king-
 less years

Have past—were wormwood-bitter to
 me. King.

Methought that if we sat beside the
 well,
 And hurl'd to ground what knight
 soever spurr'd
 Against us, thou would'st take me
 gladlier back,
 And make, as ten-times worthier to be
 thine
 Than twenty Balins, Balan knight. I
 have said.

Not so—not all. A man of thine to-day
 Abash'd us both, and brake my boast.
 Thy will?'

Said Arthur 'Thou hast ever spoken
 truth;

Thy too fierce manhood would not let
 thee lie.

Rise, my true knight. As children
 learn, be thou

Wiser for falling! walk with me, and
 move

To music with thine Order and the
 King.

Thy chair, a grief to all the brethren,
 stands

Vacant, but thou retake it, mine
 again!'

Thereafter, when Sir Balin enter'd
 hall,

The Lost one Found was greeted as
 in Heaven

With joy that blazed itself in wood-
 land wealth

Of leaf, and gayest garlandage of
 flowers,

Along the walls and down the board;
 they sat,

And cup clash'd cup; they drank and
 some one sang,

Sweet-voiced, a song of welcome,
 whereupon

Their common shout in chorus, mount-
 ing, made

Those banners of twelve battles over-
 head

Stir, as they stir'd of old, when
 Arthur's host

Proclaim'd him Victor, and the day
 was won.

Then Balan added to their Order
 lived

A wealthier life than heretofore with
these
And Balin, till their embassy
return'd.

'Sir King' they brought report 'we
hardly found,
So bush'd about it is with gloom, the
hall
Of him to whom ye sent us, Pellam,
once
A Christless foe of thine as ever dash'd
Horse against horse; but seeing that
thy realm
Hath prosper'd in the name of Christ,
the King
Took, as in rival heat, to holy things;
And finds himself descended from the
Saint
Arimathæan Joseph; him who first
Brought the great faith to Britain
over seas;
He boasts his life as purer than thine
own;
Eats scarce enow to keep his pulse
abeat;
Hath push'd aside his faithful wife,
nor lets
Or dame or damsel enter at his gates
Lest he should be polluted. This
gray King
Show'd us a shrine wherein were
wonders—yea—
Rich arks with priceless bones of
martyrdom,
Thorns of the crown and shivers of
the cross,
And therewithal (for thus he told us)
brought
By holy Joseph hither, that same
spear
Wherewith the Roman pierced the
side of Christ.
He much amazed us; after, when we
sought
The tribute, answer'd "I have quite
foregone
All matters of this world: Garlon,
mine heir,
Of him demand it," which this Gar-
lon gave
With much ado, railing at thine and
thee.

But when we left, in those deep
woods we found
A knight of thine spear-stricken from
behind,
Dead, whom we buried; more than
one of us
Cried out on Garlon, but a woodman
there
Reported of some demon in the
woods
Was once a man, who driven by evil
tongues
From all his fellows, lived alone, and
came
To learn black magic, and to hate his
kind
With such a hate, that when he died,
his soul
Became a Fiend, which, as the man in
life
Was wounded by blind tongues he
saw not whence,
Strikes from behind. This woodman
show'd the cave
From which he sallies, and wherein
he dwelt.
We saw the hoof-print of a horse, no
more.'

Then Arthur, 'Let who goes before
me, see
He do not fall behind me: foully
slain
And villainously! who will hunt for
me
This demon of the woods?' Said
Balan, 'I'!
So claim'd the quest and rode away,
but first,
Embracing Balin, 'Good my brother,
hear!
Let not thy moods prevail, when I am
gone
Who used to lay them! hold them
outer fiends,
Who leap at thee to tear thee; shake
them aside,
Dreams ruling when wit sleeps! yea,
but to dream
That any of these would wrong thee,
wrongs thyself.
Witness their flowery welcome.
Bound are they

To speak no evil. Truly safe for
fears,
My fears for thee, so rich a fellowship
Would make me wholly blest; thou
one of them,
Be one indeed: consider them, and
all
Their bearing in their common bond
of love,
No more of hatred than in Heaven
itself,
No more of jealousy than in Para-
dise.'

So Balan warn'd, and went; Balin
remain'd:
Who—for but three brief moons had
glanced away
From being knighted till he smote the
thrall,
And faded from the presence into
years
Of exile—now would strictlier set
himself
To learn what Arthur meant by
courtesy,
Manhood, and knighthood; wherefore
hover'd round
Lancelot, but when he mark'd his
high sweet smile
In passing, and a transitory word
Make knight or churl or child or dam-
sel seem
From being smiled at happier in them-
selves—
Sigh'd, as a boy lame-born beneath a
height,
That glooms his valley, sighs to see
the peak
Sun-flush'd, or touch at night the
northern star;
For one from out his village lately
climb'd
And brought report of azure lands
and fair,
Far seen to left and right; and he
himself
Hath hardly scaled with help a hun-
dred feet
Up from the base: so Balin marvel-
ling oft
How far beyond him Lancelot seem'd
to move,

Groan'd, and at times would mutter,
'These be gifts,
Born with the blood, not learnable,
divine,
Beyond *my* reach. Well had I
foughten—well—
In those fierce wars, struck hard—and
had I crown'd
With my slain self the heaps of whom
I slew—
So—better!—But this worship of the
Queen,
That honor too wherein she holds
him—this,
This was the sunshine that hath given
the man
A growth, a name that branches o'er
the rest,
And strength against all odds, and
what the King
So prizes—overprizes—gentleness.
Her likewise would I worship an I
might.
I never can be close with her, as he
That brought her hither. Shall I
pray the King
To let me bear some token of his
Queen
Whereon to gaze, remembering her—
forget
My heats and violences? live afresh?
What, if the Queen disdain'd to grant
it I nay
Being so stately-gentle, would she
make
My darkness blackness? and with
how sweet grace
She greeted my return! Bold will
I be—
Some goodly cognizance of Guinevere,
In lieu of this rough beast upon my
shield,
Langued gules, and tooth'd with grin-
ning savagery.'

And Arthur, when Sir Balin sought
him, said
'What wilt thou bear?' Balin was
bold, and ask'd
To bear her own crown-royal upon
shield,
Whereat she smiled and turn'd ner to
the King,

Who answer'd 'Thou shalt put the crown to use.

The crown is but the shadow of the King,

And this a shadow's shadow, let him have it,

So this will help him of his violences !'

'No shadow' said Sir Balin 'O my Queen,

But light to me! no shadow, O my King

But golden earnest of a gentler life !'

So Balin bare the crown, and all the knights

Approved him, and the Queen, and all the world

Made music, and he felt his being move

In music with his Order, and the King.

The nightingale, full-toned in middle May,

Hath ever and anon a note so thin

It seems another voice in other groves ;

Thus, after some quick burst of sudden wrath,

The music in him seem'd to change, and grow

Faint and far-off.

And once he saw the thrall

His passion half had gauntleted to death,

That causer of his banishment and shame,

Smile at him, as he deem'd, presumptuously :

His arm half rose to strike again, but fell :

The memory of that cognizance on shield

Weighted it down, but in himself he moan'd :

'Too high this mount of Camelot for me :

These high-set courtesies are not for me.

Shall I not rather prove the worse for these ?

Fierier and stormier from restraining, break

Into some madness ev'n before the Queen ?'

Thus, as a hearth lit in a mountain home,

And glancing on the window, when the gloom

Of twilight deepens round it, seems a flame

That rages in the woodland far below,

So when his moods were darken'd, court and King

And all the kindly warmth of Arthur's hall

Shadow'd an angry distance : yet he strove

To learn the graces of their Table, fought

Hard with himself, and seem'd at length in peace.

Then chanced, one morning, that Sir Balin sat

Close-bower'd in that garden nigh the hall.

A walk of roses ran from door to door ;

A walk of lilies crost it to the bower : And down that range of roses the great Queen

Came with slow steps, the morning on her face ;

And all in shadow from the counter door

Sir Lancelot as to meet her, then at once,

As if he saw not, glanced aside, and paced

The long white walk of lilies toward the bower.

Follow'd the Queen ; Sir Balin heard her 'Prince,

Art thou so little loyal to thy Queen,

As pass without good morrow to thy Queen ?'

To whom Sir Lancelot with his eyes on earth,

'Fain would I still be loyal to the Queen.'

'Yea so' she said 'but so to pass me by—

So loyal scarce is loyal to thyself,
Whom all men rate the king of cour-
tesy.

Let be: ye stand, fair lord, as in a
dream.'

Then Lancelot with his hand among
the flowers
'Yea—for a dream. Last night me-
thought I saw
That maiden Saint who stands with
lily in hand
In yonder shrine. All round her
prest the dark,
And all the light upon her silver face
Flow'd from the spiritual lily that she
held.

Lo! these her emblems drew mine
eyes—away:
For see, how perfect-pure! As light
a flush
As hardly tints the blossom of the
quince
Would mar their charm of stainless
maidenhood.'

'Sweeter to me' she said 'this
garden rose
Deep-hued and many-folded! sweeter
still
The wild-wood hyacinth and the bloom
of May.
Prince, we have ridd'n before among
the flowers
In those fair days—not all as cool as
these,
Tho' season-earlier. Art thou sad?
or sick?
Our noble King will send thee his
own leech—
Sick? or for any matter anger'd at me?'

Then Lancelot lifted his large eyes;
they dwelt
Deep-tranced on hers, and could not
fall: her hue
Changed at his gaze: so turning side
by side
They past, and Balin started from his
bower.

'Queen? subject? but I see not
what I see.

Damsel and lover? hear not what I
hear.

My father hath begotten me in his
wrath.

I suffer from the things before me,
know,

Learn nothing; am not worthy to be
knight;

A churl, a clown!' and in him gloom
on gloom

Deepen'd: he sharply caught his lance
and shield,

Nor stay'd to crave permission of the
king,

But, mad for strange adventure, dash'd
away.

He took the selfsame track as Balan,
saw

The fountain where they sat together,
sigh'd

'Was I not better there with him?'
and rode

The skyless woods, but under open
blue

Came on the hoarhead woodman at a
bough

Wearily hewing. 'Churl, thine axe!'
he cried,

Descended, and disjointed it at a blow:
To whom the woodman utter'd won-
deringly

'Lord, thou couldst lay the Devil of
these woods

If arm of flesh could lay him.' Balin
cried

'Him, or the viler devil who plays his
part,

To lay that devil would lay the Devil
in me.'

'Nay' said the churl, 'our devil is a
truth,

I saw the flash of him but yestereven.
And some do say that our Sir Garlon

too

Hath learn'd black magic, and to ride
unseen.

Look to the cave.' But Balin answer'd
him

'Old fabler, these be fancies of the
churl,

Look to thy woodcraft,' and so leav-
ing him,

Now with slack rein and careless of
himself,
Now with dug spur and raving at him-
self,
Now with droopt brow down the long
glades he rode;
So mark'd not on his right a cavern-
chasm
Yawn over darkness, where, nor far
within,
The whole day died, but, dying,
gleam'd on rocks
Roof-pendent, sharp; and others from
the floor,
Tusklike, arising, made that mouth of
night
Whereout the Demon issued up from
Hell.
He mark'd not this, but blind and deaf
to all
Save that chain'd rage, which ever
yelp'd within,
Past eastward from the falling sun.
At once
He felt the hollow-beaten mosses
thud
And tremble, and then the shadow of
a spear,
Shot from behind him, ran along the
ground.
Sideways he started from the path,
and saw,
With pointed lance as if to pierce, a
shape,
A light of armor by him flash, and
pass
And vanish in the woods; and fol-
low'd this,
But all so blind in rage that unawares
He burst his lance against a forest
bough,
Dishorsed himself, and rose again, and
fled
Far, till the castle of a King, the hall
Of Pellam, lichen-bearded, grayly
draped
With streaming grass, appear'd, low-
built but strong;
The ruinous donjon as a knoll of
moss,
The battlement overtopt with ivytods,
A home of bats, in every tower an
owl.

Then spake the men of Pellam cry-
ing 'Lord,
Why wear ye this crown-royal upon
shield?'
Said Balin 'For the fairest and the
best
Of ladies living gave me this to bear.'
So stall'd his horse, and strode across
the court,
But found the greetings both of knight
and King
Faint in the low dark hall of banquet:
leaves
Laid their green faces flat against the
panes,
Sprays grated, and the .canker'd
boughs without
Whined in the wood; for all was
hush'd within,
Till when at feast Sir Garlon likewise
ask'd
'Why wear ye that crown-royal?'
Balin said
'The Queen we worship, Lancelot, I,
and all,
As fairest, best and purest, granted me
To bear it!' Such a sound (for
Arthur's knights
Were hated strangers in the hall) as
makes
The white swan-mother, sitting, when
she hears
A strange knee rustle thro' her secret
reeds,
Made Garlon, hissing; then he sourly
smiled.
'Fairest I grant her: I have seen;
but best,
Best, purest? *thou* from Arthur's hall,
and yet
So simple! hast thou eyes, or if, are
these
So far besotted that they fail to see
This fair wife-worship cloaks a secret
shame?
Truly, ye men of Arthur be but babes.'

A goblet on the board by Balin,
boss'd
With holy Joseph's legend, on his
right
Stood, all of massiest bronze: one side
had sea

And ship and sail and angels blowing
on it:
And one was rough with wattling,
and the walls
Of that low church he built at Glaston-
bury.
This Balin graspt, but while in act to
hurl,
Thro' memory of that token on the
shield
Relax'd his hold: 'I will be gentle' he
thought
'And passing gentle' caught his hand
away.
Then fiercely to Sir Garlon 'eyes have I
That saw to-day the shadow of a spear,
Shot from behind me, run along the
ground;
Eyes too that long have watch'd how
Lancelot draws
From homage to the best and purest,
might,
Name, manhood, and a grace, but
scantly thine,
Who, sitting in thine own hall, canst
endure
To mouth so huge a foulness—to thy
guest,
Me, me of Arthur's Table. Felon
talk!
Let be! no more!

But not the less by night
The scorn of Garlon, poisoning all his
rest,
Stung him in dreams. At length, and
dim thro' leaves
Blinkt the white morn, sprays grated,
and old boughs
Whined in the wood. He rose, de-
scended, met
The scorn in the castle court, and
fain,
For hate and loathing, would have
past him by;
But when Sir Garlon utter'd mock-
ing-
wise;
'What, wear ye still that same crown-
scandalous?'
His countenance blacken'd, and his
forehead veins
Bloated, and branch'd; and tearing
out of sheath

The brand, Sir Balin with a fiery 'Ha!
So thou be shadow, here I make thee
ghost,'
Hard upon helm smote him, and the
blade flew
Splintering in six, and clinkt upon the
stones.
Then Garlon, reeling slowly back-
ward, fell,
And Balin by the banneret of his helm
Dragg'd him, and struck, but from the
castle a cry
Sounded across the court, and—men-
at-arms,
A score with pointed lances, making
at him—
He dash'd the pummel at the fore-
most face,
Beneath a low door dipt, and made his
feet
Wings thro' a glimmering gallery, till
he mark'd
The portal of King Pellam's chapel
wide
And inward to the wall; he stept
behind;
Thence in a moment heard them pass
like wolves
Howling; but while he stared about
the shrine,
In which he scare could spy the Christ
for Saints,
Beheld before a golden altar lie
The longest lance his eyes had ever
seen,
Point-painted red; and seizing there-
upon
Push'd thro' an open casement down,
lean'd on it,
Leapt in a semicircle, and lit on earth;
Then hand at ear, and harkening from
what side
The blindfold rummage buried in the
walls
Might echo, ran the counter path, and
found
His charger; mounted on him and
away.
An arrow whizz'd to the right, one to
the left,
One overhead; and Pellam's feeble cry
'Stay, stay him! he defileth heavenly
things

With earthly uses'—made him quickly
dive
Beneath the boughs, and race thro'
many a mile
Of dense and open, till his goodly
horse,
Arising wearily at a fallen oak,
Stumbled headlong, and cast him face
to ground.

Half-wroth he had not ended, but
all glad,
Knightlike, to find his charger yet
unlamed,
Sir Balin drew the shield from off his
neck,
Stared at the priceless cognizance,
and thought
'I have shamed thee so that now thou
shamest me,
Thee will I bear no more,' high on a
branch
Hung it, and turn'd aside into the
woods,
And there in gloom cast himself all
along,
Moaning 'My violences, my vio-
lences!'

But now the wholesome music of
the wood
Was dumb'd by one from out the hall
of Mark,
A damsel-errant, warbling, as she rode
The woodland alleys, Vivien, with her
Squire.

'The fire of Heaven has kill'd the
barren cold,
And kindled all the plain and all the
wold.
The new leaf ever pushes off the old.
The fire of Heaven is not the flame of
Hell.

Old priest, who mumble worship in
your quire—
Old monk and nun, ye scorn the
world's desire,
Yet in your frosty cells ye feel the
fire!
The fire of Heaven is not the flame of
Hell.

The fire of Heaven is on the dusty
ways.
The wayside blossoms open to the
blaze.
The whole wood-world is one full peal
of praise.
The fire of Heaven is not the flame of
Hell.

The fire of Heaven is Lord of all
things good,
And starve not thou this fire within
thy blood,
But follow Vivien thro' the fiery flood!
The fire of Heaven is not the flame of
Hell!

Then turning to her Squire 'This
fire of Heaven,
This old sun-worship, boy, will rise
again,
And beat the cross to earth, and break
the King
And all his Table.'

Then they reach'd a glade,
Where under one long lane of cloud-
less air
Before another wood, the royal crown
Sparkled, and swaying upon a restless
elm
Drew the vague glance of Vivien, and
her Squire;
Amazed were these; 'Lo there' she
cried—'a crown—
Borne by some high lord-prince of
Arthur's hall,
And there a horse! the rider? where
is he?
See, yonder lies one dead within the
wood.
Not dead; he stirs!—but sleeping. I
will speak.
Hail, royal knight, we break on thy
sweet rest,
Not, doubtless, all unearn'd by noble
deeds.
But bounden art thou, if from Arthur's
hall,
To help the weak. Behold, I fly from
shame,
A lustful King, who sought to win my
love

Thro' evil ways: the knight, with
whom I rode,
Hath suffer'd misadventure, and my
squire
Hath in him small defence; but thou,
Sir Prince,
Wilt surely guide me to the warrior
King,
Arthur the blameless, pure as any
maid,
To get me shelter for my maidenhood.
I charge thee by that crown upon thy
shield,
And by the great Queen's name, arise
and hence.'

And Balin rose, 'Thither no more!
nor Prince
Nor knight am I, but one that hath
defamed
The cognizance she gave me: here I
dwell
Savage among the savage woods, here
die—
Die: let the wolves' black maws en-
sepulchre
Their brother beast, whose anger was
his lord.
Ome, that such a name as Guinevere's,
Which our high Lancelot hath so
lifted up,
And been thereby uplifted, should
thro' me,
My violence, and my villainy, come to
shame.'

Thereat she suddenly laugh'd and
shrill, anon
Sigh'd all as suddenly. Said Balin to
her
'Is this thy courtesy—to mock me, ha?
Hence, for I will not with thee.' Again
she sigh'd
'Pardon, sweet lord! we maidens often
laugh
When sick at heart, when rather we
should weep.
I knew thee wrong'd. I brake upon
thy rest,
And now full loth am I to break thy
dream,
But thou art man, and canst abide a
truth,

Tho' bitter. Hither, boy—and mark
me well.
Dost thou remember at Caerleon
once—
A year ago—nay, then I love thee not—
Ay, thou rememberest well—one sum-
mer dawn—
By the great tower—Caerleon upon
Usk—
Nay, truly we were hidden: this fair
lord,
The flower of all their vestal knight-
hood, knelt
In amorous homage—knelt—what
else?—O ay
Knelt, and drew down from out his
night-black hair
And mumbled that white hand whose
ring'd caress
Had wander'd from her own King's
golden head,
And lost itself in darkness, till she
cried—
I thought the great tower would crash
down on both—
"Rise, my sweet King, and kiss me on
the lips,
Thou art my King." This lad, whose
lightest word
Is mere white truth in simple naked-
ness,
Saw them embrace: he reddens, can-
not speak,
So bashful, he! but all the maiden
Saints,
The deathless mother-maidenhood of
Heaven
Cry out upon her. Up then, ride with
me!
Talk not of shame! thou canst not,
an thou would'st,
Do these more shame than these have
done themselves.'

She lied with ease; but horror-
stricken he,
Remembering that dark bower at
Camelot,
Breathed in a dismal whisper 'It is
truth.'

Sunnily she smiled 'And even in
this lone wood,

Sweet lord, ye do right well to whisper
this.
Fools prate, and perish traitors.
Woods have tongues,
As walls have ears: but thou shalt go
with me,
And we will speak at first exceeding
low.
Meet is it the good King be not de-
ceived.
See now, I set thee high on vantage
ground,
From whence to watch the time, and
eagle-like
Stoop at thy will on Lancelot and the
Queen."

She ceased; his evil spirit upon him
leapt,
He ground his teeth together, sprang
with a yell,
Tore from the branch, and cast on
earth, the shield,
Drove his mail'd heel athwart the
royal crown,
Stamp'd all into defacement, hurl'd it
from him
Among the forest weeds, and cursed
the tale,
The told-of, and the teller.

That weird yell,
Unearthlier than all shriek of bird or
beast,
Thrill'd thro' the woods; and Balan
lurking there
(His quest was unaccomplish'd) heard
and thought
'The scream of that Wood-devil I
came to quell!'
Then nearing 'Lo! he hath slain some
brother-knight,
And tramples on the goodly shield to
show
His loathing of our Order and the
Queen.
My quest, meseems, is here. Or devil
or man
Guard thou thine head.' Sir Balin
spake not word,
But snatch'd a sudden buckler from
the Squire,

And vaulted on his horse, and so they
crash'd
In onset, and King Pellam's holy
spear,
Reputed to be red with sinless blood,
Redden'd at once with sinful, for the
point
Across the maiden shield of Balan
prick'd
The hauberk to the flesh; and Balin's
horse
Was wearied to the death, and, when
they clash'd,
Rolling back upon Balin, crush'd the
man
Inward, and either fell, and swoon'd
away.

Then to her Squire mutter'd the
damsel 'Fools!
This fellow hath wrought some foul-
ness with his Queen:
Else never had he borne her crown,
nor raved,
And thus foam'd over at a rival
name:
But thou, Sir Chick, that scarce hast
broken shell,
Art yet half-yolk, not even come to
down—
Who never sawest Caerleon upon
Usk—
And yet hast often pleaded for my
love—
See what I see, be thou where I have
been,
Or else Sir Chick—dismount and
loose their casques
I fain would know what manner of
men they be.'
And when the Squire had loosed
them, 'Goodly!—look!
They might have cropt the myriad
flower of May,
And butt each other here, like brain-
less bulls,
Dead for one heifer!'

Then the gentle Squire
'I hold them happy, so they died for
love:
And, Vivien, tho' ye beat me like your
dog,

I too could die, as now I live, for thee.'

'Live on, Sir Boy,' she cried. 'I better prize
The living dog than the dead lion:
away!
I cannot brook to gaze upon the dead.'
Then leapt her palfrey o'er the fallen oak,
And bounding forward 'Leave them to the wolves.'

But when their foreheads felt the cooling air,
Balin first woke, and seeing that true face,
Familiar up from cradle-time, so wan,
Crawl'd slowly with low moans to where he lay,
And on his dying brother cast himself
Dying; and *he* lifted faint eyes; he felt
One near him; all at once they found the world,
Staring wild-wide; then with a child-like wail,
And drawing down the dim disastrous brow
That o'er him hung, he kiss'd it, moan'd and spake;

'O Balin, Balin, I that fain had died
To save thy life, have brought thee to thy death.
Why had ye not the shield I knew? and why
Trampled ye thus on that which bare the Crown?'

Then Balin told him brokenly, and in gasps,
All that had chanced, and Balan moan'd again.

'Brother, I dwelt a day in Pellam's hall:
This Garlon mock'd me, but I heeded not.

And one said "Eat in peace! a liar is he,
And hates thee for the tribute!" this good knight
Told me, that twice a wanton damsel came,
And sought for Garlon at the castle-gates,
Whom Pellam drove away with holy heat.
I well believe this damsel, and the one
Who stood beside thee even now, the same.
"She dwells among the woods" he said "and meets
And dallies with him in the Mouth of Hell."
Foul are their lives; foul are their lips; they lied.
Pure as our own true Mother is our Queen.'

'O brother' answer'd Balin 'woe is me!
My madness all thy life has been thy doom,
Thy curse, and darken'd all thy day; and now
The night has come. I scarce can see thee now.
Goodnight! for we shall never bid again
Goodmorrow—Dark my doom was here, and dark
It will be there. I see thee now no more.
I would not mine again should darken thine,
Goodnight, true brother.'

Balan answer'd low
'Goodnight, true brother here! good-morrow there!
We two were born together, and we die
Together by one doom:' and while he spoke
Closed his death-drowning eyes, and slept the sleep
With Balin, either lock'd in either's arms.



"MAN FOR THE FIELD AND WOMAN FOR THE HEARTH," —Page 71.



MERLIN AND VIVIEN.

A STORM was coming, but the winds
were still,
And in the wild woods of Broce-
liande,
Before an oak, so hollow, huge and
old
It look'd a tower of ivied masonwork,
At Merlin's feet the wily Vivien lay.

For he that always bare in bitter
grudge
The slights of Arthur and his Table,
Mark
The Cornish King, had heard a wan-
dering voice,
A minstrel of Caerleon by strong
storm
Blown into shelter at Tintagil, say
That out of naked knightlike purity
Sir Lancelot worshipt no unmarried
girl
But the great Queen herself, fought in
her name,
Sware by her—vows like theirs, that
high in heaven
Love most, but neither marry, nor are
given
In marriage, angels of our Lord's
report.

He ceased, and then—for Vivien
sweetly said
(She sat beside the banquet nearest
Mark),
'And is the fair example follow'd,
Sir,
In Arthur's household?'—answer'd
innocently:

'Ay, by some few—ay, truly—youths
that hold
It more becometh the perfect virgin
knight
To worship woman as true wife be-
yond
All hopes of gaining, than as maiden
girl.
They place their pride in Lancelot
and the Queen.
So passionate for an utter purity

Beyond the limit of their bond, are
these,
For Arthur bound them not to single-
ness.
Brave hearts and clean! and yet—
God guide them—youths.'

Then Mark was half in heart to
hurl his cup
Straight at the speaker, but forebore:
he rose
To leave the hall, and, Vivien follow-
ing him,
Turn'd to her: 'Here are snakes with-
in the grass;
And you methinks, O Vivien, save ye
fear
The monkish manhood, and the mask
of pure
Worn by this court, can stir them till
they sting.'

And Vivien answer'd, smiling scorn-
fully,
'Why fear? because that foster'd at
thy court
I savor of thy—virtues? fear them?
no.
As Love, if Love be perfect, casts out
fear,
So Hate, if Hate be perfect, casts out
fear.
My father died in battle against the
King,
My mother on his corpse in open field;
She bore me there, for born from
death was I
Among the dead and sown upon the
wind—
And then on thee! and shown the
truth betimes,
That old true filth, and bottom of the
well,
Where Truth is hidden. Gracious
lessons thine
And maxims of the mud! "This
Arthur pure!
Great Nature thro' the flesh herself
hath made
Gives him the lie! There is no being
pure,
My cherub; saith not Holy Writ the
same?"—

If I were Arthur, I would have thy blood.
 Thy blessing, stainless King! I bring thee back,
 When I have ferreted out their burrowings,
 The hearts of all this Order in mine hand—
 Ay—so that fate and craft and folly close,
 Perchance, one curl of Arthur's golden beard.
 To me this narrow grizzled fork of thine
 Is cleaner-fashion'd—Well, I loved thee first,
 That warps the wit.'

Loud laugh'd the graceless Mark.
 But Vivien, into Camelot stealing, lodged
 Low in the city, and on a festal day
 When Guinevere was crossing the great hall
 Cast herself down, knelt to the Queen,
 and wail'd.

'Why kneel ye there? What evil have ye wrought?
 Rise!' and the damsel bidden rise arose
 And stood with folded hands and downward eyes
 Of glancing corner, and all meekly said,
 'None wrought, but suffer'd much, an orphan maid!
 My father died in battle for thy King,
 My mother on his corpse—in open field,
 The sad sea-sounding wastes of Lyonesse—
 Poor wretch—no friend!—and now by Mark the King
 For that small charm of feature mine, pursued—
 If any such be mine—I fly to thee.
 Save, save me thou—Woman of women—thine
 The wreath of beauty, thine the crown of power,

Be thine the balm of pity, O Heaven's own white
 Earth-angel, stainless bride of stainless King—
 Help, for he follows! take me to thyself!
 O yield me shelter for mine innocence
 Among thy maidens!'

Here her slow sweet eyes
 Fear-tremulous, but humbly hopeful,
 rose
 Fixt on her hearer's, while the Queen who stood
 All glittering like May sunshine on May leaves
 In green and gold, and plumed with green replied,
 'Peace, child! of overpraise and over-blame
 We choose the last. Our noble Arthur, him
 Ye scarce can overpraise, will hear and know.
 Nay—we believe all evil of thy Mark—
 Well, we shall test thee farther; but this hour
 We ride a-hawking with Sir Lancelot.
 He hath given us a fair falcon which he train'd;
 We go to prove it. Bide ye here the while.'

She past; and Vivien murmur'd after 'Go!
 I bide the while.' Then thro' the portal-arch
 Peering askance, and muttering brokenwise,
 As one that labors with an evil dream,
 Beheld the Queen and Lancelot get to horse.

'Is that the Lancelot? goodly—ay, but gaunt:
 Courteous—amends for gauntness—takes her hand—
 That glance of theirs, but for the street, had been
 A clinging kiss—how hand lingers in hand!

Let go at last!—they ride away—to
hawk
For waterfowl. Royaller game is
mine.
For such a supersensual sensual bond
As that gray cricket chirpt of at our
hearth—
Touch flax with flame—a glance will
serve—the liars!
Ah little rat that borest in the dyke
Thy hole by night to let the boundless
deep
Down upon far-off cities while they
dance—
Or dream—of thee they dream'd not—
nor of me
These—ay, but each of either: ride,
and dream
The mortal dream that never yet was
mine—
Ride, ride and dream until ye wake—
to me!
Then, narrow court and lubber King,
farewell!
For Lancelot will be gracious to the
rat,
And our wise Queen, if knowing that
I know,
Will hate, loathe, fear—but honor me
the more.'

Yet while they rode together down
the plain,
Their talk was all of training, terms
of art,
Diet and seeling, jesses, leash and
lure.
'She is too noble' he said 'to check
at pies,
Nor will she rake: there is no base-
ness in her.'
Here when the Queen demanded as
by chance
'Know ye the stranger woman?'
'Let her be,'
Said Lancelot and unhooded casting
off
The goodly falcon free; she tower'd;
her bells,
Tone under tone, shrill'd, and they
lifted up
Their eager faces, wondering at the
strength,

Boldness and royal knighthood of the
bird
Who pounced her quarry and slew it.
Many a time
As once—of old—among the flowers—
they rode.

But Vivien half-forgotten of the
Queen
Among her damsels broidering sat,
heard, watch'd
And whisper'd: thro' the peaceful
court she crept
And whisper'd: then as Arthur in the
highest
Leaven'd the world, so Vivien in the
lowest,
Arriving at a time of golden rest,
And sowing one ill hint from ear to
ear,
While all the heathen lay at Arthur's
feet,
And no quest came, but all was joust
and play,
Leaven'd his hall. They heard and
let her be.

Thereafter as an enemy that has
left
Death in the living waters, and with-
drawn,
The wily Vivien stole from Arthur's
court.

She hated all the knights, and
heard in thought
Their lavish comment when her name
was named.
For once, when Arthur walking all
alone,
Vext at a rumor issued from her-
self
Of some corruption crept among his
knights,
Had met her, Vivien, being greeted
fair,
Would fain have wrought upon his
cloudy mood
With reverent eyes mock-loyal, shaken
voice,
And flutter'd adoration, and at last
With dark sweet hints of some who
prized him more

Than who should prize him most ; at
 which the King
 Had gazed upon her blankly and gone
 by :
 But one had watch'd, and had not held
 his peace :
 It made the laughter of an afternoon
 That Vivien should attempt the blame-
 less King.
 And after that, she set herself to gain
 Him, the most famous man of all those
 times,
 Merlin, who knew the range of all
 their arts,
 Had built the King his havens, ships,
 and halls,
 Was also Bard, and knew the starry
 heavens ;
 The people call'd him Wizard ; whom
 at first
 She play'd about with slight^e and
 sprightly talk,
 And vivid smiles, and faintly-venom'd
 points
 Of slander, glancing here and grazing
 there ;
 And yielding to his kindlier moods,
 the Seer
 Would watch her at her petulance, and
 play,
 Ev'n when they seem'd unloveable,
 and laugh
 As those that watch a kitten ; thus he
 grew
 Tolerant of what he half disdain'd,
 and she,
 Perceiving that she was but half dis-
 dain'd,
 Began to break her sports with graver
 fits,
 Turn red or pale, would often when
 they met
 Sigh fully, or all-silent gaze upon him
 With such a fixt devotion, that the old
 man,
 Tho' doubtful, felt the flattery, and at
 times
 Would flatter his own wish in age for
 love,
 And half believe her true : for thus at
 times
 He waver'd ; but that other clung to
 him,

Fixt in her will, and so the seasons
 went.

Then fell on Merlin a great melan-
 choly ;
 He walk'd with dreams and darkness,
 and he found
 A doom that ever poised itself to
 fall,
 An ever-moaning battle in the mist,
 World-war of dying flesh against the
 life,
 Death in all life and lying in all love,
 The meanest having power upon the
 highest,
 And the high purpose broken by the
 worm.

So leaving Arthur's court he gain'd
 the beach ;
 There found a little boat, and stept
 into it ;
 And Vivien follow'd, but he mark'd
 her not.
 She took the helm and he the sail ;
 the boat
 Drave with a sudden wind across the
 deeps,
 And touching Breton sands, they dis-
 embark'd.
 And then she follow'd Meriin all the
 way,
 Ev'n to the wild woods of Broceliande.
 For Merlin once had told her of a
 charm,
 The which if any wrought on anyone
 With woven paces and with waving
 arms,
 The man so wrought on ever seem'd
 to lie
 Closed in the four walls of a hollow
 tower,
 From which was no escape for ever-
 more ;
 And none could find that man for ever-
 more,
 Nor could he see but him who wrought
 the charm
 Coming and going, and he lay as dead
 And lost to life and use and name and
 fame.
 And Vivien ever sought to work the
 charm

Upon the great Enchanter of the
Time,
As fancying that her glory would be
great
According to his greatness whom she
quench'd.

There lay she all her length and
kiss'd his feet,
As if in deepest reverence and in love.
A twist of gold was round her hair; a
robe
Of samite without price, that more
express
Than hid her, clung about her lissome
limbs,
In color like the satin-shining palm
On sallows in the windy gleams of
March:
And while she kiss'd them, crying,
'Trample me,
Dear feet, that I have follow'd thro'
the world,
And I will pay you worship; tread me
down
And I will kiss you for it;' he was
mute:
So dark a forethought roll'd about his
brain,
As on a dull day in an Ocean cave
The blind wave feeling round his long
sea-hall
In silence: wherefore, when she lifted
up
A face of sad appeal, and spake and
said,
'O Merlin, do ye love me?' and again,
'O Merlin, do ye love me?' and once
more,
'Great Master, do ye love me?' he was
mute.
And lissome Vivien, holding by his
heel,
Writhed toward him, slid up his
knee and sat,
Behind his ankle twined her hollow
feet
Together, curved an arm about his
neck,
Clung like a snake; and letting her
left hand
Droop from his mighty shoulder, as a
leaf,

Made with her right a comb of pearl
to part
The lists of such a beard as youth gone
out
Had left in ashes: then he spoke and
said,
Not looking at her, 'Who are wise in
love
Love most, say least,' and Vivien an-
swer'd quick,
'I saw the little elf-god eyeless once
In Arthur's arras hall at Camelot:
But neither eyes nor tongue—O stupid
child!
Yet you are wise who say it; let me
think
Silence is wisdom; I am silent then,
And ask no kiss;' then adding all at
once,
'And lo, I clothe myself with wisdom,'
drew
The vast and shaggy mantle of his
beard
Across her neck and bosom to her
knee,
And call'd herself a gilded summer fly
Caught in a great old tyrant spider's
web,
Who meant to eat her up in that wild
wood
Without one word. So Vivien call'd
herself,
But rather seem'd a lovely baleful star
Veil'd in gray vapor; till he sadly
smiled:
'To what request for what strange
boon,' he said,
'Are these your pretty tricks and fool-
eries,
O Vivien, the preamble? yet my
thanks,
For these have broken up my melan-
choly.'

And Vivien answer'd smiling sau-
cily,
'What, O my Master, have ye found
your voice?
I bid the stranger welcome. Thanks
at last!
But yesterday you never open'd lip,
Except indeed to drink: no cup had
we:

In mine own lady palms I cull'd the
 spring
 That gather'd trickling dropwise from
 the cleft,
 And made a pretty cup of both my
 hands
 And offer'd you it kneeling : then you
 drank
 And knew no more, nor gave me one
 poor word ;
 O no more thanks than might a goat
 have given
 With no more sign of reverence than
 a beard.
 And when we halted at that other
 well,
 And I was faint to swooning, and you
 lay
 Foot-gilt with all the blossom-dust of
 those
 Deep meadows we had traversed, did
 you know
 That Vivien bathed your feet before
 her own ?
 And yet no thanks : and all thro' this
 wild wood
 And all this morning when I fondled
 you :
 Boon, ay, there was a boon, one not so
 strange—
 How had I wrong'd you ? surely ye
 are wise,
 But such a silence is more wise than
 kind.'

And Merlin lock'd his hand in hers
 and said :
 'O did ye never lie upon the shore,
 And watch the curl'd white of the
 coming wave
 Glass'd in the slippery sand before it
 breaks ?
 Ev'n such a wave, but not so pleasur-
 able,
 Dark in the glass of some presageful
 mood,
 Had I for three days seen, ready to fall.
 And then I rose and fled from Arthur's
 court
 To break the mood. You follow'd
 me unask'd ;
 And when I look'd, and saw you
 following still,

My mind involved yourself the near-
 est thing
 In that mind-mist : for shall I tell you
 truth ?
 You seem'd that wave about to break
 upon me
 And sweep me from my hold upon the
 world,
 My use and name and fame. Your
 pardon, child.
 Your pretty sports have brighten'd all
 again.
 And ask your boon, for boon I owe
 you thrice,
 Once for wrong done you by confu-
 sion, next
 For thanks it seems till now neglected,
 last
 For these your dainty gambols :
 wherefore ask ;
 And take this boon so strange and
 not so strange.'

And Vivien answer'd smiling
 mournfully :
 'O not so strange as my long asking it,
 Not yet so strange as you yourself are
 strange,
 Nor half so strange as that dark mood
 of yours.
 I ever fear'd ye were not wholly mine ;
 And see, yourself have own'd ye did
 me wrong.
 The people call you prophet : let it be :
 But not of those that can expound
 themselves.
 Take Vivien for expounder ; she will
 call
 That three-days-long presageful gloom
 of yours
 No presage, but the same mistrustful
 mood
 That makes you seem less noble than
 yourself,
 Whenever I have ask'd this very boon,
 Now ask'd again : for see you not, dear
 love,
 That such a mood as that, which lately
 gloom'd
 Your fancy when ye saw me following
 you,
 Must make me fear still more you are
 not mine,

Must make me yearn still more to
 prove you mine,
 And make me wish still more to learn
 this charm
 Of woven paces and of waving hands,
 As proof of trust. O Merlin, teach it
 me.
 The charm so taught will charm us
 both to rest.
 For, grant me some slight power upon
 your fate,
 I, feeling that you felt me worthy trust,
 Should rest and let you rest, knowing
 you mine.
 And therefore be as great as ye are
 named,
 Not muffled round with selfish reti-
 cence.
 How hard you look and how deny-
 ingly!
 O, if you think this wickedness in me,
 That I should prove it on you
 unawares,
 That makes me passing wrathful; then
 our bond
 Had best be loosed for ever: but
 think or not,
 By Heaven that hears I tell you the
 clean truth,
 As clean as blood of babes, as white
 as milk:
 O Merlin, may this earth, if ever I,
 If these unwitty wandering wits of
 mine,
 Ev'n in the jumbled rubbish of a
 dream,
 Have tript on such conjectural treach-
 ery—
 May this hard earth cleave to the
 Nadir hell
 Down, down, and close again, and nip
 me flat,
 If I be such a traitress. Yield my
 boon,
 Till which I scare can yield you all I
 am;
 And grant my re-reiterated wish,
 The great proof of your love: because
 I think,
 I However wise, ye hardly know me yet.'

And Merlin loosed his hand from
 hers and said,

'I never was less wise, however wise,
 Too curious Vivien, tho' you talk of
 trust,
 Than when I told you first of such a
 charm.
 Yea, if ye talk of trust I tell you this,
 Too much I trusted when I told you
 that,
 And stirr'd this vice in you which
 ruin'd man
 Thro' woman the first hour; for how-
 soe'er
 In children a great curiousness be
 well,
 Who have to learn themselves and all
 the world,
 In you, that are no child, for still I
 find
 Your face is practised when I spell the
 lines,
 I call it,—well, I will not call it vice:
 But since you name yourself the sum-
 mer fly,
 I well could wish a cobweb for the
 gnat,
 That settles, beaten back, and beaten
 back
 Settles, till one could yield for wear-
 ness:
 But since I will not yield to give you
 power
 Upon my life and use and name and
 fame,
 Why will ye never ask some other
 boon?
 Yea, by God's rood, I trusted you too
 much.'

And Vivien, like the tenderest-
 hearted maid
 That ever bided tryst at village stile,
 Made answer, either eyelid wet with
 tears:
 'Nay, Master, be not wrathful with
 your maid;
 Caress her: let her feel herself for-
 given
 Who feels no heart to ask another
 boon.
 I think ye hardly know the tender
 rhyme
 Of "trust me not at all or all in
 all."

I heard the great Sir Lancelot sing it
once,
And it shall answer for me. Listen
to it.

"In Love, if Love be Love, if Love
be ours,
Faith and unfaith can ne'er be equal
powers:
Unfaith in aught is want of faith in
all.

"It is the little rift within the lute,
That by and by will make the music
mute,
And ever widening slowly silence all.

"The little rift within the lover's
lute
Or little pitted speck in garner'd fruit,
That rotting inward slowly moulders
all.

"It is not worth the keeping: let it
go:
But shall it? answer, darling, answer,
no.
And trust me not at all or all in all."

O Master, do ye love my tender
rhyme?"

And Merlin look'd and half believed
her true,
So tender was her voice, so fair her
face,
So sweetly gleam'd her eyes behind
her tears
Like sunlight on the plain behind a
shower:
And yet he answer'd half indignantly:

'Far other was the song that once I
heard
By this huge oak, sung nearly where
we sit:
For here we met, some ten or twelve
of us,
To chase a creature that was current
then
In these wild woods, the hart with
golden horns.

It was the time when first the question
rose
About the founding of a Table Round,
That was to be, for love of God and
men
And noble deeds, the flower of all the
world.
And each incited each to noble
deeds.
And while we waited, one, the young-
est of us,
We could not keep him silent, out he
flash'd,
And into such a song, such fire for
fame,
Such trumpet-blowings in it, coming
down
To such a stern and iron-clashing
close,
That when he stopt we long'd to hurl
together,
And should have done it; but the
beauteous beast
Scared by the noise upstart at our
feet,
And like a silver shadow slipt away
Thro' the dim land; and all day long
we rode
Thro' the dim land against a rushing
wind,
That glorious roundel echoing in our
ears,
And chased the flashes of his golden
horns
Until they vanish'd by the fairy well
That laughs at iron—as our warriors
did—
Where children cast their pins and
nails, and cry,
"Laugh, little well!" but touch it
with a sword,
It buzzes fiercely round the point, and
there
We lost him: such a noble song was
that.
But, Vivien, when you sang me that
sweet rhyme,
I felt as tho' you knew this cursed
charm,
Were proving it on me, and that I
lay
And felt them slowly ebbing, name
and fame.'

And Vivien answer'd smiling
mournfully:
'O mine have ebb'd away for ever-
more,
And all thro' following you to this
wild wood,
Because I saw you sad, to comfort
you.
Lo now, what hearts have men! they
never mount
As high as woman in her selfless
mood.
And touching fame, howe'er ye scorn
my song,
Take one verse more—the lady speaks
it—this:

"My name, once mine, now thine,
is closelier mine,
For fame, could fame be mine, that
fame were thine,
And shame, could shame be thine,
that shame were mine.
So trust me not at all or all in all."

'Says she not well? and there is
more—this rhyme
Is like the fair pearl-necklace of the
Queen,
That burst in dancing, and the pearls
were spilt;
Some lost, some stolen, some as
relics kept.
But nevermore the same two sister
pearls
Ran down the silken thread to kiss
each other
On her white neck—so is it with this
rhyme:
It lives dispersedly in many hands,
And every minstrel sings it differ-
ently:
Yet is there one true line, the pearl
of pearls:
"Man dreams of Fame while woman
wakes to love."
Yea! Love, tho' Love were of the
grossest, carves
A portion from the solid present, eats
And uses, careless of the rest; but
Fame,
The Fame that follows death is
nothing to us;

And what is Fame in life but half-
disfame,
And counterchanged with darkness?
ye yourself
Know well that Envy calls you Devil's
son,
And since ye seem the Master of all
Art,
They fain would make you Master of
all vice.'

And Merlin lock'd his hand in hers
and said,
'I once was looking for a magic
weed,
And found a fair young squire who
sat alone,
Had carved himself a knightly shield
of wood,
And then was painting on it fancied
arms,
Azure, an Eagle rising or, the Sun
In dexter chief; the scroll "I follow
fame."
And speaking not, but leaning over
him,
I took his brush and blotted out the
bird,
And made a Gardener putting in a
graff,
With this for motto, "Rather use
than fame."
You should have seen him blush;
but afterwards
He made a stalwart knight. O Viv-
ien,
For you, methinks you think you love
me well;
For me, I love you somewhat; rest:
and Love
Should have some rest and pleasure
in himself,
Not ever be too curious for a hoan,
Too prurient for a proof against the
grain
Of him ye say ye love: but Fame
with men,
Being but ampler means to serve man-
kind,
Should have small rest or pleasure in
herself,
But work as vassal to the larger
love,

That dwarfs the petty love of one to one.

Use gave me Fame at first, and Fame again

Increasing gave me use. Lo, there my boon!

What other? for men sought to prove me vile,

Because I fain had given them greater wits:

And then did Envy call me Devil's son:

The sick weak beast seeking to help herself

By striking at her better, miss'd, and brought

Her own claw back, and wounded her own heart.

Sweet were the days when I was all unknown,

But when my name was lifted up, the storm

Brake on the mountain and I cared not for it.

Right well know I that Fame is half-disfame,

Yet needs must work my work. That other fame,

To one at least, who hath not children, vague,

The cackle of the unborn about the grave,

I cared not for it: a single misty star,

Which is the second in a line of stars

That seem a sword beneath a belt of three,

I never gazed upon it but I dreamt Of some vast charm concluded in that star

To make fame nothing. Wherefore, if I fear,

Giving you power upon me thro' this charm,

That you might play me falsely, having power,

However well ye think ye love me now

(As sons of kings loving in pupilage Have turn'd to tyrants when they came to power)

I rather dread the loss of use than fame;

If you—and not so much from wickedness,

As some wild turn of anger, or a mood

Of overstrain'd affection, it may be,

To keep me all to your own self,—or else

A sudden spurt of woman's jealousy,—

Should try this charm on whom-ye say ye love.'

And Vivien answer'd smiling as in wrath—

'Have I not sworn? I am not trusted. Good!

Well, hide it, hide it; I shall find it out;

And being found take heed of Vivien. A woman and not trusted, doubtless

I Might feel some sudden turn of anger

Of your misfaith; and your fine epithet

Is accurate too, for this full love of mine

Without the full heart back may merit well

Your term of overstrain'd. So used as I,

My daily wonder is, I love at all.

And as to woman's jealousy, O why not?

O to what end, except a jealous one,

And one to make me jealous if I love,

Was this fair charm invented by yourself?

I well believe that all about this world

Ye cage a buxom captive here and there,

Closed in the four walls of a hollow tower

From which is no escape for evermore.'

Then the great Master merrily answer'd her:

'Full many a love in loving youth was mine;

I needed then no charm to keep them mine

But youth and love; and that full
heart of yours
Whereof ye prattle, may now assure
you mine;
So live uncharm'd. For those who
wrought it first,
The wrist is parted from the hand that
waved,
The feet unmortised from their ankle-
bones
Who paced it, ages back: but will ye
hear
The legend as in guerdon for your
rhyme?

*There lived a king in the most
Eastern East,
Less old than I, yet older, for my
blood
Hath earnest in it of far springs to be.
A tawny pirate anchor'd in his port,
Whose bark had plunder'd twenty
nameless isles;
And passing one, at the high peep of
dawn,
He saw two cities in a thousand
boats
All fighting for a woman on the sea.
And pushing his black craft among
them all,
He lightly scatter'd theirs and brought
her off,
With loss of half his people arrow-
slain;
A maid so smooth, so white, so won-
derful,
They said a light came from her when
she moved:
And since the pirate would not yield
her up,
The King impaled him for his piracy;
Then made her Queen: but those
isle-nurtured eyes
Waged such unwilling tho' successful
war
On all the youth, they sicken'd; coun-
cils thinn'd,
And armies waned, for magnet-like
she drew
The rustiest iron of old fighters'
hearts;
And beasts themselves would wor-
ship; camels knelt

Unbidden, and the brutes of mountain
back
That carry kings in castles, bow'd
black knees
Of homage, ringing with their serpent
hands,
To make her smile, her golden ankle-
bells.
What wonder, being jealous, that he
sent
His horns of proclamation out thro'
all
The hundred under-kingdoms that he
sway'd
To find a wizard who might teach the
King
Some charm, which being wrought
upon the Queen
Might keep her all his own: to such a
one
He promised more than ever king has
given,
A league of mountain full of golden
mines,
A province with a hundred miles of
coast,
A palace and a princess, all for him:
But on all those who tried and fail'd,
the King
Pronounced a dismal sentence, mean-
ing by it
To keep the list low and pretenders
back,
Or like a king, not to be trifled with—
Their heads should moulder on the
city gates.
And many tried and fail'd, because
the charm
Of nature in her overbore their own:
And many a wizard brow bleach'd on
the walls:
And many weeks a troop of carrion
crows
Hung like a cloud above the gateway
towers.'

And Vivien breaking in upon him-
said:
'I sit and gather honey; yet, me,
thinks,
Thy tongue has tript a little: ask thy-
self.
The lady never made *unwilling* war

With those fine eyes: she had her
 pleasure in it,
 And made her good man jealous with
 good cause.
 And lived there neither dame nor
 damsel then
 Wroth at a lover's loss? were all
 as tame,
 I mean, as noble, as their Queen was
 fair?
 Not one to flirt a venom at her eyes,
 Or pinch a murderous dust into her
 drink,
 Or make her paler with a poison'd
 rose?
 Well, those were not our days: but
 did they find
 A wizard? Tell me, was he like to
 thee?'

She ceased, and made her lithe arm
 round his neck
 Tighten, and then drew back, and let
 her eyes
 Speak for her, glowing on him, like a
 bride's
 On her new lord, her own, the first of
 men.

He answer'd laughing, 'Nay, not
 like to me.
 At last they found—his foragers for
 charms—
 A little glassy-headed hairless man,
 Who lived alone in a great wild on
 grass;
 Read but one book, and ever reading
 grew
 So grated down and filed away with
 thought,
 So lean his eyes were monstrous;
 while the skin
 Clung but to crate and basket, ribs
 and spine.
 And since he kept his mind on one
 sole aim,
 Nor ever touch'd fierce wine, nor
 tasted flesh,
 Nor own'd a sensual wish, to him the
 wall
 That sunders ghosts and shadow-
 casting men

Became a crystal, and he saw them
 thro' it,
 And heard their voices talk behind,
 the wall,
 And learnt their elemental secrets,
 powers
 And forces; often o'er the sun's bright
 eye
 Drew the vast eyelid of an inky
 cloud,
 And lash'd it at the base with slanting
 storm;
 Or in the noon of mist and driving
 rain,
 When the lake whiten'd and the pine-
 wood roar'd,
 And the cairn'd mountain was a
 shadow, sunn'd
 The world to peace again: here was
 the man.
 And so by force they dragg'd him to
 the King.
 And then he taught the King to charm
 the Queen
 In such-wise, that no man could see
 her more,
 Nor saw she save the King, who
 wrought the charm,
 Coming and going, and she lay as
 dead,
 And lost all use of life: but when the
 King
 Made proffer of the league of golden
 mines,
 The province with a hundred miles of
 coast,
 The palace and the princess, that old
 man
 Went back to his old wild, and lived
 on grass,
 And vanished, and his book came
 down to me.'

And Vivien answer'd smiling
 saucily:
 'Ye have the book: the charm is
 written in it:
 Good: take my counsel: let me know
 it at once:
 For keep it like a puzzle chest in
 chest,
 With each chest lock'd and padlock'd
 thirty-fold,

And whelm all this beneath as vast a mound
 As after a furious battle turfs the slain
 On some wild down above the windy deep,
 I yet should strike upon a sudden means
 To dig, pick, open, find and read the charm:
 Then, if I tried it, who should blame me then?'

And smiling as a master smiles at one
 That is not of his school, nor any school
 But that where blind and naked Ignorance
 Delivers brawling judgments, unashamed,
 On all things all day long, he answer'd her:

'Thou read the book, my pretty Vivien!
 O ay, it is but twenty pages long,
 But every page having an ample marge,
 And every marge enclosing in the midst
 A square of text that looks a little blot,
 The text no larger than the limbs of fleas;
 And every square of text an awful charm,
 Writ in a language that has long gone by.
 So long, that mountains have arisen since
 With cities on their flanks—thou read the book!
 And every margin scribbled, crost, and cramm'd
 With comment, densest condensation, hard
 To mind and eye; but the long sleepless nights
 Of my long life have made it easy to me.
 And none can read the text, not even I;

And none can read the comment but myself;
 And in the comment did I find the charm.
 O, the results are simple; a mere child
 Might use it to the harm of anyone,
 And never could undo it: ask no more:
 For tho' you should not prove it upon me,
 But keep that oath ye sware, ye might, perchance,
 Assay it on some one of the Table Round,
 And all because ye dream they babble of you.'

And Vivien, frowning in true anger, said:
 'What dare the full-fed liars say of me?
They ride abroad redressing human wrongs!
 They sit with knife in meat and wine in horn!
They bound to holy vows of chastity!
 Were I not woman, I could tell a tale.
 But you are man, you well can understand
 The shame that cannot be explain'd for shame.
 Not one of all the drove should touch me: swine!'

Then answer'd Merlin careless of her words:
 'You breathe but accusation vast and vague,
 Spleen-born, I think, and proofless. If ye know,
 Set up the charge ye know, to stand or fall!'

And Vivien answer'd frowning wrathfully:
 'O ay, what say ye to Sir Valence, him
 Whose kinsman left him watcher o'er his wife
 And two fair babes, and went to distant lands;
 Was one year gone, and on returning found
 Not two but three? there lay the reckling, one

But one hour old! What said the
happy sire?
A seven-months' babe had been a truer
gift.
Those twelve sweet moons confused
his fatherhood.'

Then answer'd Merlin, 'Nay, I
know the tale.
Sir Valence wedded with an outland
dame:
Some cause had kept him sunder'd
from his wife:
One child they had: it lived with her:
she died:
His kinsman travelling on his own
affair
Was charged by Valence to bring
home the child.
He brought, not found it therefore:
take the truth.'

'O ay,' said Vivien, 'overtune a tale.
What say ye then to sweet Sir Sagra-
more,
That ardent man? "to pluck the
flower in season,"
So says the song, "I trow it is no trea-
son."
O Master, shall we call him overquick
To crop his own sweet rose before the
hour?'

And Merlin answer'd, 'Overquick
art thou
To catch a loathly plume fall'n from
the wing
Of that foul bird of rapine whose whole
prey
Is man's good name: he never wrong'd
his bride.
I know the tale. An angry gust of
wind
Puff'd out his torch among the myriad-
room'd
And many-corridor'd complexities
Of Arthur's palace: then he found a
door,
And darkling felt the sculptured orna-
ment
That wreathen round it made it seem
his own;

And wearied out made for the couch
and slept,
A stainless man beside a stainless
maid;
And either slept, nor knew of other
there;
Till the high dawn piercing the royal
rose
In Arthur's casement glimmer'd
chastely down,
Blushing upon them blushing, and at
once
He rose without a word and parted
from her:
But when the thing was blazed about
the court,
The brute world howling forced them
into bonds,
And as it chanced they are happy, be-
ing pure.'

'O ay,' said Vivien, 'that were likely
too.
What say ye then to fair Sir Percivale
And of the horrid foulness that he
wrought,
The saintly youth, the spotless lamb
of Christ,
Or some black wether of St. Satan's
fold.
What, in the precincts of the chapel-
yard,
Among the knightly brasses of the
graves,
And by the cold Hic Jacets of the
dead!'

And Merlin answer'd careless of her
charge,
'A sober man is Percivale and pure;
But once in life was fluster'd with new
wine,
Then paced for coolness in the chapel-
yard;
Where one of Satan's shepherdesses
caught
And meant to stamp him with her
master's mark;
And that he sinned is not believable;
For, look upon his face!—but it is
sinn'd,
The sin that practice burns into the
blood,

And not the one dark hour which
brings remorse,
Will brand us, after, of whose fold we
be :
Or else were he, the holy king, whose
hymns
Are chanted in the minster, worse than
all.
But is your spleen froth'd out, or have
ye more ?'

And Vivien answer'd frowning yet
in wrath :
'O ay; what say ye to Sir Lancelot,
friend
Traitor or true? that commerce with
the Queen,
I ask you, is it clamor'd by the child,
Or whisper'd in the corner do ye
know it?'

To which he answer'd sadly, 'yea, I
know it.
Sir Lancelot went ambassador, at first,
To fetch her, and she watch'd him from
her walls.
A rumor runs, she took him for the
King,
So fixt her fancy on him : let them be.
But have ye no one word of loyal
praise
For Arthur, blameless King and stain-
less man?'

She answer'd with a low and chuck-
ling laugh :
'Man! is he man at all, who knows
and winks?
Sees what his fair bride is and does,
and winks?
By which the good King means to
blind himself,
And blinds himself and all the Table
Round
To all the foulness that they work.
Myself
Could call him (were it not for woman-
hood)
The pretty, popular name such man-
hood earns,
Could call him the main cause of all
their crime ;

Yea, were he not crown'd King,
coward, and fool.'

Then Merlin to his own heart, loath-
ing, said :
'O true and tender! O my liege and
King!
O selfless man and stainless gentle-
man,
Who wouldst against thine own eye-
witness fain
Have all men true and leal, all women
pure;
How, in the mouths of base interpre-
ters,
From over-fineness not intelligible
To things with every sense as false and
foul
As the poach'd filth that floods the
middle street,
Is thy white blamelessness accounted
blame!'

But Vivien, deeming Merlin over-
borne
By instance, recommenced, and let her
tongue
Rage like a fire among the noblest
names,
Polluting, and imputing her whole self,
Defaming and defacing, till she left
Not even Lancelot brave, nor Gala-
had clean.

Her words had issue other than she
will'd.
He dragg'd his eyebrow bushes down,
and made
A snowy penthouse for his hollow
eyes,
And mutter'd in himself, 'Tell *her* the
charm!
So, if she had it, would she rail on me
To snare the next, and if she have it
not
So will she rail. What did the wan-
ton say?
"Not mount as high;" we scarce can
sink as low :
For men at most differ as Heaven and
earth,
But women, worst and best, as Heaven
and Hell.

I know the Table Round, my friends
 of old;
 All brave, and many generous, and
 some chaste.
 She cloaks the scar of some repulse
 with lies;
 I well believe she tempted them and
 fail'd,
 Being so bitter: for fine plots may fail,
 Tho' harlots paint their talk as well
 as face
 With colors of the heart that are not
 theirs.
 I will not let her know: nine tithes
 of times
 Face-flatterer and backbiter are the
 same.
 And they, sweet soul, that most im-
 pute a crime
 Are pronest to it, and impute them-
 selves,
 Wanting the mental range; or low
 desire
 Not to feel lowest makes them level
 all;
 Yea, they would pare the mountain to
 the plain,
 To leave an equal baseness; and in
 this
 Are harlots like the crowd, that if
 they find
 Some stain or blemish in a name of
 note,
 Not grieving that their greatest are so
 small,
 Inflate themselves with some insane
 delight,
 And judge all nature from her feet of
 clay,
 Without the will to lift their eyes, and
 see
 Her godlike head crown'd with spir-
 itual fire,
 And touching other worlds. I am
 weary of her.'

He spoke in words part heard, in
 whispers part,
 Half-suffocated in the hoary fell
 And many-winter'd fleece of throat
 and chin.
 But Vivien, gathering somewhat of
 his mood,

And hearing 'harlot' mutter'd twice
 or thrice,
 Leapt from her session on his lap, and
 stood
 Stiff as a viper frozen; loathsome
 sight,
 How from the rosy lips of life and
 love,
 Flash'd the bare-grinning skeleton of
 death!
 White was her cheek; sharp breaths
 of anger puff'd
 Her fairy nostril out; her hand half-
 clench'd
 Went faltering sideways downward to
 her belt,
 And feeling; had she found a dagger
 there
 (For in a wink the false love turns to
 hate)
 She would have stabb'd him; but she
 found it not:
 His eye was calm, and suddenly she
 took
 To bitter weeping like a beaten child,
 A long, long weeping, not consolable.
 Then her false voice made way,
 broken with sobs:

'O crueller than was ever told in
 tale,
 Or sung in song! O vainly lavish'd
 love!
 O cruel, there was nothing wild or
 strange,
 Or seeming shameful—for what shame
 in love,
 So love be true, and not as yours is—
 nothing
 Poor Vivien had not done to win his
 trust
 Who call'd her what he call'd her—
 all her crime,
 All—all—the wish to prove him
 wholly hers.'

She mused a little, and then clapt
 her hands
 Together with a wailing shriek, and
 said:
 'Stabb'd through the heart's affec-
 tions to the heart!

Seethed like the kid in its own mother's milk!
Kill'd with a word worse than a life of blows!
I thought that he was gentle, being great:
O God, that I had loved a smaller man!
I should have found in him a greater heart.
O, I, that flattering my true passion, saw
The knights, the court, the King, dark in your light,
Who loved to make men darker than they are,
Because of that high pleasure which I had
To seat you sole upon my pedestal
Of worship—I am answer'd, and henceforth
The course of life that seem'd so flowery to me
With you for guide and master, only you,
Becomes the sea-cliff pathway broken short,
And ending in a ruin—nothing left,
But into some low cave to crawl, and there,
If the wolf spare me, weep my life away,
Kill'd with inutterable unkindness.'

She paused, she turn'd away, she hung her head,
The snake of gold slid from her hair, the braid
Slipt and uncoil'd itself, she wept afresh,
And the dark wood grew darker toward the storm
In silence, while his anger slowly died
Within him, till he let his wisdom go
For ease of heart, and half believed her true:
Call'd her to shelter in the hollow oak,
'Come from the storm,' and having no reply,
Gazed at the heaving shoulder, and the face
Hand-hidden, as for utmost grief or shame;

Then thrice essay'd, by tenderest-touching terms,
To sleek her ruffled peace of mind, in vain.
At last she let herself be conquer'd by him,
And as the cageling newly flown returns,
The seeming-injured simple-hearted thing
Came to her old perch back, and settled there.
There while she sat, half-falling from his knees,
Half-nestled at his heart, and since he saw
The slow tear creep from her closed eyelid yet,
About her, more in kindness than in love,
The gentle wizard cast a shielding arm.
But she dislink'd herself at once and rose,
Her arms upon her breast across, and stood,
A virtuous gentlewoman deeply wrong'd,
Upright and flush before him: then she said:

'There must be now no passages of love
Betwixt us twain henceforward evermore;
Since, if I be what I am grossly call'd,
What should be granted which your own gross heart
Would reckon worth the taking? I will go.
In truth, but one thing now—better have died
Thrice than have ask'd it once—could make me stay—
That proof of trust—so often ask'd in vain!
How justly, after that vile term of yours,
I find with grief! I might believe you then,
Who knows? once more. Lo! what was once to me

Mere matter of the fancy, now hath
grown
The vast necessity of heart and life.
Farewell; think gently of me, for I
fear

My fate or folly, passing gayer youth
For one so old, must be to love thee
still.

But ere I leave thee let me swear once
more

That if I schemed against thy peace
in this,

May you just heaven, that darkens
o'er me, send

One flash, that, missing all things else,
may make

My scheming brain a cinder, if I lie.

Scarce had she ceased, when out of
heaven a bolt

(For now the storm was close above
them) struck,

Furrowing a giant oak, and javelining
With darted spikes and splinters of
the wood

The dark earth round. He raised his
eyes and saw

The tree that shone white-listed thro'
the gloom.

But Vivien, fearing heaven had heard
her oath,

And dazzled by the livid-flickering
fork,

And deafen'd with the stammering
cracks and claps

That follow'd, flying back and crying
out,

'O Merlin, tho' you do not love me,
save,

Yet save me!' clung to him and
hugg'd him close;

And call'd him dear protector in her
fright,

Nor yet forgot her practice in her
fright,

But wrought upon his mood and
hugg'd him close.

The pale blood of the wizard at her
touch

Took gayer colors, like an opal
warm'd.

She blamed herself for telling hearsay
tales:

She shook from fear, and for her fault
she wept

Of petulancy; she call'd him lord and
liege,

Her seer, her bard, her silver star of
eve,

Her God, her Merlin, the one passion-
ate love

Of her whole life; and ever overhead
Bellow'd the tempest, and the rotten

branch

Snapt in the rushing of the river-rain
Above them; and in change of glare

and gloom

Her eyes and neck glittering went and
came;

Till now the storm, its burst of passion
spent,

Moaning and calling out of other
lands,

Had left the ravaged woodland yet
once more

To peace; and what should not have
been had been,

For Merlin, overtalk'd and overworn,
Had yielded, told her all the charm,

and slept.

Then, in one moment, she put forth
the charm

Of woven paces and of waving hands,
And in the hollow oak he lay as dead,

And lost to life and use and name and
fame.

Then crying 'I have made his glory
mine,'

And shrieking out 'O fool!' the har-
lot leapt

Adown the forest, and the thicket
closed

Behind her, and the forest echo'd:
'fool.'

LANCELOT AND ELAINE.

ELAINE the fair, Elaine the loveable,
Elaine, the lily maid of Astolat,

High in her chamber up a tower to
the east

Guarded the sacred shield of Lancelot;

Which first she placed where morn-
ing's earliest ray
Might strike it, and awake her with
the gleam;
Then fearing rust or soilure fashion'd
for it
A case of silk, and braided there-
upon
All the devices blazon'd on the shield
In their own tinct, and added, of her
wit,
A border fantasy of branch and flower,
And yellow-throated nestling in the
nest,
Nor rested thus content, but day by
day,
Leaving her household and good
father, climb'd
That eastern tower, and entering
barr'd her door,
Strip'd off the case, and read the naked
shield,
Now guess'd a hidden meaning in his
arms,
Now made a pretty history to herself
Of every dint a sword had beaten in
it,
And every scratch a lance had made
upon it,
Conjecturing when and where: this
cut is fresh;
That ten years back; this dealt him at
Caerlyle;
That at Caerleon; this at Camelot:
And ah God's mercy, what a stroke
was there!
And here a thrust that might have
kill'd, but God
Broke the strong lance, and roll'd his
enemy down,
And saved him: so she lived in fan-
tasy.

How came the lily maid by that
good shield
Of Lancelot, she that knew not ev'n
his name?
He left it with her, when he rode to
tilt
For the great diamond in the diamond
jousts,
Which Arthur had ordain'd, and by
that name

Had named them, since a diamond
was the prize.

For Arthur, long before they
crown'd him King,
Roving the trackless realms of Lyon-
nesse,
Had found a glen, gray boulder and
black tarn.
A horror lived about the tarn, and
clave
Like its own mists to all the mountain
side:
For here two brothers, one a king,
had met
And fought together; but their names
were lost;
And each had slain his brother at a
blow;
And down they fell and made the glen
abhor'd:
And there they lay till all their bones
were bleach'd,
And lichen'd into color with the
crag:
And he, that once was king, had on a
crown
Of diamonds, one in front, and four
aside.
And Arthur came, and laboring up
the pass,
All in a misty moonshine, unawares
Had trodden that crown'd skeleton,
and the skull
Brake from the nape, and from the
skull the crown
Roll'd into light, and turning on its
rims
Fled like a glittering rivulet to the
tarn:
And down the shingly scaur he
plunged, and caught,
And set it on his head, and in his
heart
Heard murmurs, 'Lo, thou likewise
shalt be King.'

Thereafter, when a King, he had
the gems
Pluck'd from the crown, and show'd
them to his knights,
Saying, 'These jewels, whereupon I
chanced

Divinely, are the kingdom's, not the
 King's—
 For public use: henceforward let
 there be,
 Once every year, a joust for one of
 these:
 For so by nine years' proof we needs
 must learn
 Which is our mightiest, and ourselves
 shall grow
 In use of arms and manhood, till we
 drive
 The heathen, who, some say, shall
 rule the land
 Hereafter, which God hinder.' Thus
 he spoke:
 And eight years past, eight jousts had
 been, and still
 Had Lancelot won the diamond of
 the year,
 With purpose to present them to the
 Queen,
 When all were won; but meaning all
 at once
 To snare her royal fancy with a
 boon
 Worth half her realm, had never
 spoken word.

Now for the central diamond and
 the last
 And largest, Arthur, holding then his
 court
 Hard on the river nigh the place
 which now
 Is this world's hugest, let proclaim a
 joust
 At Camelot, and when the time drew
 nigh
 Spake (for she had been sick) to
 Guinevere,
 'Are you so sick, my Queen, you can-
 not move
 To these fair jousts?' 'Yea, lord,'
 she said, 'ye know it.'
 'Then will ye miss,' he answer'd,
 'the great deeds
 Of Lancelot, and his prowess in the
 lists,
 A sight ye love to look on.' And the
 Queen
 Lifted her eyes, and they dwelt
 languidly

On Lancelot, where he stood beside
 the King.
 He thinking that he read her meaning
 there,
 'Stay with me, I am sick; my love is
 more
 Than many diamonds,' yielded; and
 a heart
 Love-loyal to the least wish of the
 Queen
 (However much he yearn'd to make
 complete
 The tale of diamonds for his destined
 boon)
 Urged him to speak against the truth,
 and say,
 'Sir King, mine ancient wound is
 hardly whole,
 And lets me from the saddle;' and
 the King
 Glanced first at him, then her, and
 went his way.
 No sooner gone than suddenly she
 began:

'To blame, my lord Sir Lancelot,
 much to blame!
 Why go ye not to these fair jousts?
 the knights
 Are half of them our enemies, and
 the crowd
 Will murmur, "Lo the shameless
 ones, who take
 Their pastime now the trustful King
 is gone!"'
 Then Lancelot vext at having lied in
 vain:
 'Are ye so wise? ye were not once so
 wise,
 My Queen, that summer, when ye
 loved me first.
 Then of the crowd ye took no more
 account
 Than of the myriad cricket of the
 mead,
 When its own voice clings to each
 blade of grass,
 And every voice is nothing. As to
 knights,
 Them surely can I silence with all ease.
 But now my loyal worship is allow'd
 Of all men: many a bard, without
 offence,

Has link'd our names together in his
lay,
Lancelot, the flower of bravery,
Guinevere,
The pearl of beauty: and our knights
at feast
Have pledged us in this union, while
the King
Would listen smiling. How then?
is there more?
Has Arthur spoken aught? or would
yourself,
Now weary of my service and devoir,
Henceforth be truer to your faultless
lord?

She broke into a little scornful
laugh:
'Arthur, my lord, Arthur, the fault-
less King,
That passionate perfection, my good
lord—
But who can gaze upon the Sun in
heaven?
He never spake word of reproach to
me,
He never had a glimpse of mine
untruth,
He cares not for me: only here
to-day
There gleam'd a vague suspicion in
his eyes:
Some meddling rogue has tamper'd
with him—else
Rapt in this fancy of his Table
Round,
And swearing men to vows impossi-
ble,
To make them like himself: but,
friend, to me
He is all fault who hath no fault at all:
For who loves me must have a touch
of earth;
The, low sun makes the color: I am
yours,
Not Arthur's, as ye know, save by the
bond.
And therefore hear my words: go to
the jousts:
The tiny-trumpeting gnat can break
our dream
When sweetest; and the vermin
voices here

May buzz so loud—we scorn them,
but they sting.'

Then answer'd Lancelot, the chief
of knights:
'And with what face, after my pretext
made,
Shall I appear, O Queen, at Camelot, I
Before a King who honors his own
word,
As if it were his God's?'

'Yea,' said the Queen.
'A moral child without the craft to
rule,
Else had he not lost me: but listen to
me,
If I must find you wit: we hear it
said
That men go down before your spear
at a touch,
But knowing you are Lancelot; your
great name,
This conquers: hide it therefore; go
unknown:
Win! by this kiss you will: and our
true King
Will then allow your pretext, O my
knight,
As all for glory; for to speak him
true,
Ye know right well, how meek soe'er
he seem,
No keener hunter after glory breathes.
He loves it in his knights more than
himself:
They prove to him his work: win and
return.'

Then got Sir Lancelot suddenly to
horse,
Wroth at himself. Not willing to be
known,
He left the barren-beaten thorough-
fare,
Chose the green path that show'd the
rarer foot,
And there among the solitary downs,
Full often lost in fancy, lost his way;
Till as he traced a faintly-shadow'd
track,
That all in loops and links among the
dales

Ran to the Castle of Astolat, he saw
Fired from the west, far on a hill, the
towers.

Thither he made, and blew the gate-
way horn.

Then came an old, dumb, myriad-
wrinkled man,

Who let him into lodging and dis-
arm'd.

And Lancelot marvell'd at the word-
less man;

And issuing found the Lord of Astolat
With two strong sons, Sir Torre and
Sir Lavaine,

Moving to meet him in the castle
court;

And close behind them stept the lily
maid

Elaine, his daughter: mother of the
house

There was not: some light jest
among them rose

With laughter dying down as the
great knight

Approach'd them: then the Lord of
Astolat:

'Whence comest thou, my guest, and
by what name

Livest between the lips? for by thy
state

And presence I might guess thee
chief of those,

After the King, who eat in Arthur's
halls.

Him have I seen: the rest, his Table
Round,

Known as they are, to me they are
unknown.'

Then answer'd Lancelot, the chief
of knights:

Known am I, and of Arthur's hall,
and known,

What I by mere mischance have
brought, my shield.

But since I go to joust as one un-
known

At Camelot for the diamond, ask me
not,

Hereafter ye shall know me—and the
shield—

I pray you lend me one, if such you
have,

Blank, or at least with some device
not mine.'

Then said the Lord of Astolat,
'Here is Torre's:

Hurt in his first tilt was my son, Sir
Torre.

And so, God wot, his shield is blank
enough.

His ye can have.' Then added plain
Sir Torre,

'Yea, since I cannot use it, ye may
have it.'

Here laugh'd the father saying, 'Fie,
Sir Churl,

Is that an answer for a noble knight?
Allow him! but Lavaine, my younger

here,

He is so full of lustihood, he will ride,
Joust for it, and win, and bring it in

an hour,

And set it in this damsel's golden hair,
To make her thrice as wilful as be-
fore.'

'Nay, father, nay good father,
shame me not

Before this noble knight,' said young
Lavaine,

'For nothing. Surely I but play'd on
Torre:

He seem'd so sullen, vext he could
not go:

A jest, no more! for, knight, the
maiden dreamt

That some one put this diamond in
her hand,

And that it was too slippery to be held,
And slipt and fell into some pool or

stream,

The castle-well, belike; and then I
said

That *if* I went and *if* I fought and
won it

(But all was jest and joke among our-
selves)

Then must she keep it safelier. All
was jest.

But, father, give me leave, an if he
will,

To ride to Camelot with this noble
knight:

Win shall I not, but do my best to win:

Young as I am, yet would I do my best.'

'So ye will grace me,' answer'd Lancelot,
Smiling a moment, 'with your fellowship
O'er these waste downs whereon I lost myself,
Then were I glad of you as guide and friend:
And you shall win this diamond,—as I hear
It is a fair large diamond,—if ye may,
And yield it to this maiden, if ye will.'
'A fair large diamond,' added plain Sir Torre,
'Such be for queens, and not for simple maids.'
Then she, who held her eyes upon the ground,
Elaine, and heard her name so tost about,
Flush'd slightly at the slight disparagement
Before the stranger knight, who, looking at her,
Full courtly, yet not falsely, thus return'd:
'If what is fair be but for what is fair,
And only queens are to be counted so,
Rash were my judgment then, who deem this maid
Might wear as fair a jewel as is on earth,
Not violating the bond of like to like.'

He spoke and ceased: the lily maid Elaine,
Won by the mellow voice before she look'd,
Lifted her eyes, and read his lineaments.
The great and guilty love he bare the Queen,
In battle with the love he bare his lord,
Had marr'd his face, and mark'd it ere his time.
Another sinning on such heights with one,
The flower of all the west and all the world,

Had been the sleeker for it: but in him
His mood was often like a fiend, and rose
And drove him into wastes and solitudes
For agony, who was yet a living soul.
Marr'd as he was, he seem'd the goodliest man
That ever among ladies ate in hall,
And noblest, when she lifted up her eyes.
However marr'd, of more than twice her years,
Seem'd with an ancient swordcut on the cheek,
And bruised and bronzed, she lifted up her eyes
And loved him, with that love which was her doom.

Then the great knight, the darling of the court,
Loved of the loveliest, into that rude hall
Stept with all grace, and not with half disdain
Hid under grace, as in a smaller time,
But kindly man moving among his kind:
Whom they with meats and vintage of their best
And talk and minstrel melody entertain'd.
And much they ask'd of court and Table Round,
And ever well and readily answer'd he:
But Lancelot, when they glanced at Guinevere,
Suddenly speaking of the wordless man,
Heard from the Baron that, ten years before,
The heathen caught and reft him of his tongue.
'He learnt and warn'd me of their fierce design
Against my house, and him they caught and maim'd;
But I, my sons, and little daughter fled
From bonds or death, and dwelt among the woods

By the great river in a boatman's hut.
Dull days were those, till our good
Arthur broke
The Pagan yet once more on Badon
hill.'

'O there, great lord, doubtless,' La-
vaine said, rapt
By all the sweet and sudden passion
of youth
Toward greatness in its elder, 'you
have fought.
O tell us—for we live apart—you know
Of Arthur's glorious wars,' And
Lancelot spoke
And answer'd him at full, as having
been
With Arthur in the fight which all
day long
Rang by the white mouth of the vio-
lent Glem;
And in the four loud battles by the
shore
Of Douglas; that on Bassa; then the
war
That thunder'd in and out the gloomy
skirts
Of Celidon the forest; and again
By castle Gurnion, where the glori-
ous King
Had on his cuirass worn our Lady's
Head,
Carved of one emerald center'd in a
sun
Of silver rays, that lighten'd as he
breathed;
And at Caerleon had he help'd his
lord,
When the strong neighings of the
wild white Horse
Set every gilded parapet shuddering;
And up in Agned-Cathregonion too,
And down the waste sand-shores of
Trath Treroit,
Where many a heathen fell; 'and on
the mount
Of Badon I myself beheld the King
Charge at the head of all his Table
Round,
And all his legions crying Christ and
him,
And break them; and I saw him,
after, stand

High on a heap of slain, from spur to
plume
Red as the rising sun with heathen
blood,
And seeing me, with a great voice he
cried,
"They are broken, they are broken!"
for the King,
However mild he seems at home, nor
cares
For triumph in our mimic wars, the
jousts—
For if his own knight cast him down,
he laughs
Saying, his knights are better men
than he—
Yet in this heathen war the fire of
God
Fills him: I never saw his like: there
lives
No greater leader.'

While he utter'd this,
Low to her own heart said the lily
maid,
'Save your great self, fair lord;' and
when he fell
From talk of war to traits of pleas-
antry—
Being mirthful he, but in a stately
kind—
She still took note that when the liv-
ing smile
Died from his lips, across him came a
cloud
Of melancholy severe, from which
again,
Whenever in her hovering to and fro
The lily maid had striven to make
him cheer,
There brake a sudden-beaming ten-
derness
Of manners and of nature: and she
thought
That all was nature, all, perchance, for
her.
And all night long his face before her
lived,
As when a painter, poring on a face,
Divinely thro' all hindrance finds the
man
Behind it, and so paints him that his
face,

The shape and color of a mind and
 life,
 Lives for his children, ever at its best
 And fullest; so the face before her
 lived,
 Dark-splendid, speaking in the silence,
 full
 Of noble things, and held her from
 her sleep.
 Till rathe she rose, half-cheated in
 the thought
 She needs must bid farewell to sweet
 Lavaine.
 First as in fear, step after step, she
 stole
 Down the long tower-stairs, hesitat-
 ing:
 Anon, she heard Sir Lancelot cry in
 the court,
 'This shield, my friend, where is it?'
 and Lavaine
 Past inward, as she came from out
 the tower.
 There to his proud horse Lancelot
 turn'd, and smooth'd
 The glossy shoulder, humming to
 himself.
 Half-envious of the flattering hand,
 she drew
 Nearer and stood. He look'd, and
 more amazed
 Than if seven men had set upon him,
 saw
 The maiden standing in the dewy
 light.
 He had not dream'd she was so beau-
 tiful.
 Then came on him a sort of sacred
 fear,
 For silent, tho' he greeted her, she
 stood
 Rapt on his face as if it were a God's.
 Suddenly flash'd on her a wild desire,
 That he should wear her favor at the
 tilt.
 She braved a riotous heart in asking
 for it.
 'Fair lord, whose name I know not—
 noble it is,
 I well believe, the noblest—will you
 wear
 My favor at this tourney?' 'Nay,'
 said he,

'Fair lady, since I never yet have
 worn
 Favor of any lady in the lists.
 Such is my wont, as those, who know
 me, know.'
 'Vea, so,' she answer'd; 'then in
 wearing mine
 Needs must be lesser likelihood,
 noble lord,
 That those who know should know
 you.' And he turn'd
 Her counsel up and down within his
 mind,
 And found it true, and answer'd,
 'True, my child.
 Well, I will wear it: fetch it out to
 me:
 What is it?' and she told him 'A red
 sleeve
 Broider'd with pearls,' and brought it:
 then he bound
 Her token on his helmet, with a smile
 Saying, 'I never yet have done so
 much
 For any maiden living,' and the blood
 Sprang to her face and fill'd her with
 delight;
 But left her all the paler, when Lavaine
 Returning brought the yet-unblazon'd
 shield,
 His brother's; which he gave to
 Lancelot,
 Who parted with his own to fair
 Elaine:
 'Do me this grace, my child, to have
 my shield
 In keeping till I come.' 'A grace to
 me,
 She answer'd, 'twice to-day. I am
 your squire!'
 Whereat Lavaine said, laughing, 'Lily
 maid,
 For fear our people call you lily maid
 In earnest, let me bring your color
 back;
 Once, twice, and thrice: now get you
 hence to bed:'
 So kiss'd her, and Sir Lancelot his
 own hand,
 And thus they moved away: she stay'd
 a minute,
 Then made a sudden step to the gate,
 and there—

Her bright hair blown about the serious face
 Yet rosy-kindled with her brother's kiss—
 Paused by the gateway, standing near the shield
 In silence, while she watch'd their arms far-off
 Sparkle, until they dipt below the downs.
 Then to her tower she climb'd, and took the shield,
 There kept it, and so lived in fantasy.

Meanwhile the new companions past away
 Far o'er the long backs of the bushless downs,
 To where Sir Lancelot knew there lived a knight
 Not far from Camelot, now for forty years
 A hermit, who had pray'd, labor'd and pray'd,
 And ever laboring had scoop'd himself
 In the white rock a chapel and a hall
 On massive columns, like a shore-cliff cave,
 And cells and chambers: all were fair and dry;
 The green light from the meadows underneath
 Struck up and lived along the milky roofs;
 And in the meadows tremulous aspen-trees
 And poplars made a noise of falling showers.
 And thither wending there that night they bode.

But when the next day broke from underground,
 And shot red fire and shadows thro' the cave,
 They rose, heard mass, broke fast, and rode away:
 Then Lancelot saying, 'Hear, but hold my name
 Hidden, you ride with Lancelot of the Lake,'
 Abash'd Lavaine, whose instant reverence,

Dearer to true young hearts than their own praise,
 But left him leave to stammer, 'Is it indeed?'
 And after muttering 'The great Lancelot,'
 At last he got his breath and answer'd, 'One,
 One have I seen—that other, our liege lord,
 The dread Pendragon, Britain's King of kings,
 Of whom the people talk mysteriously,
 He will be there—then were I stricken blind
 That minute, I might say that I had seen.'

So spake Lavaine, and when they reach'd the lists
 By Camelot in the meadow, let his eyes
 Run thro' the peopled gallery which half round
 Lay like a rainbow fall'n upon the grass,
 Until they found the clear-faced King, who sat
 Robed in red samite, easily to be known,
 Since to his crown the golden dragon clung,
 And down his robe the dragon writhed in gold,
 And from the carven-work behind him crept
 Two dragons gilded, sloping down to make
 Arms for his chair, while all the rest of them
 Thro' knots and loops and folds innumerable
 Fled ever thro' the woodwork, till they found
 The new design wherein they lost themselves,
 Yet with all ease, so tender was the work:
 And, in the costly canopy o'er him set,
 Blazed the last diamond of the nameless king.

Then Lancelot answer'd young Lavaine and said,

'Me you call great: mine is the
firmer seat,
The truer lance: but there is many a
youth
Now crescent, who will come to all I
am
And overcome it; and in me there
dwells
No greatness, save it be some far-off
touch
Of greatness to know well I am not
great:
There is the man.' And Lavaine
gaped upon him
As on a thing miraculous, and anon
The trumpets blew; and then did
either side,
They that assail'd, and they that held
the lists,
Set lance in rest, strike spur, suddenly
move,
Meet in the midst, and there so
furiously
Shock, that a man far-off might well
perceive,
If any man that day were left afield,
The hard earth shake, and a low
thunder of arms.
And Lancelot bode a little, till he
saw
Which were the weaker; then he
hurl'd into it
Against the stronger: little need to
speak
Of Lancelot in his glory! King,
duke, earl,
Count, baron—whom he smote, he
overthrew.

But in the field were Lancelot's kith
and kin,
Ranged with the Table Round that
held the lists,
Strong men, and wrathful that a
stranger knight
Should do and almost overdo the
deeds
Of Lancelot; and one said to the
other, 'Lo!
What is he? I do not mean the force
alone—
The grace and versatility of the
man!

Is it not Lancelot?' 'When has
Lancelot worn
Favor of any lady in the lists?
Not such his wont, as we, that know
him, know.'
'How then? who then?' a fury seized
them all,
A fiery family passion for the name
Of Lancelot, and a glory one with
theirs.
They couch'd their spears and prick'd
their steeds, and thus,
Their plumes driv'n backward by the
wind they made
In moving, all together down upon
him
Bare, as a wild wave in the wide
North-sea,
Green-glimmering toward the summit,
bears, with all
Its stormy crests that smoke against
the skies,
Down on a bark, and overbears the
bark,
And him that helms it, so they over-
bore
Sir Lancelot and his charger, and a
spear
Down-glancing lamed the charger, and
a spear
Prick'd sharply his own cuirass, and
the head
Pierced thro' his side, and there snapt,
and remain'd.

Then Sir Lavaine did well and wor-
shipfully;
He bore a knight of old repute to the
earth,
And brought his horse to Lancelot
where he lay.
He up the side, sweating with agony,
got,
But thought to do while he might yet
endure,
And being lustily holpen by the rest,
His party,—tho' it seem'd half-miracle
To those he fought with,—drave his
kith and kin,
And all the Table Round that held
the lists,
Back to the barrier; then the trumpets
blew

Proclaiming his the prize, who wore
the sleeve
Of scarlet, and the pearls; and all the
knights,
His party, cried 'Advance and take
thy prize
The diamond;' but he answer'd,
'Diamond me
No diamonds! for God's love, a little
air!
Prize me no prizes, for my prize is
death!
Hence will I, and I charge you, follow
me not.'

He spoke, and vanish'd suddenly
from the field
With young Lavaine into the poplar
grove.
There from his charger down he slid,
and sat,
Gasping to Sir Lavaine, 'Draw the
lance-head:'
'Ah my sweet lord Sir Lancelot,' said
Lavaine,
'I dread me, if I draw it, you will
die.'
But he, 'I die already with it: draw—
Draw,'—and Lavaine drew, and Sir
Lancelot gave
A marvellous great shriek and ghastly
groan,
And half his blood burst forth, and
down he sank
For the pure pain, and wholly swoon'd
away.
Then came the hermit out and bare
him in,
There stanch'd his wound; and there,
in daily doubt
Whether to live or die, for many a
week
Hid from the wide world's rumor by
the grove
Of poplars with their noise of falling
showers,
And ever-tremulous aspen-trees, he
lay.

But on that day when Lancelot fled
the lists,
His party, knights of utmost North
and West,

Lords of waste marches, kings of
desolate isles,
Came round their great Pendragon,
saying to him,
'Lo, Sire, our knight, thro' whom we
won the day,
Hath gone sore wounded, and hath
left his prize
Untaken, crying that his prize is
death.'
'Heaven hinder,' said the King, 'that
such an one,
So great a knight as we have seen to-
day—
He seem'd to me another Lancelot—
Yea, twenty times I thought him
Lancelot—
He must not pass uncared for.
Wherefore, rise,
O Gawain, and ride forth and find the
knight.
Wounded and wearied needs must he
be near.
I charge you that you get at once to
horse.
And, knights and kings, there breathes
not one of you
Will deem this prize of ours is rashly
given:
His prowess was too wondrous. We
will do him
No customary honor: since the knight
Came not to us, of us to claim the
prize,
Ourselves will send it after. Rise and
take
This diamond, and deliver it, and
return,
And bring us where he is, and how
he fares,
And cease not from your quest until
ye find.'

So saying, from the carven flower
above,
To which it made a restless heart, he
took,
And gave, the diamond: then from
where he sat
At Arthur's right, with smiling face
arose,
With smiling face and frowning heart
a Prince

In the mid might and flourish of his
May,
Gawain, surnamed The Courteous,
fair and strong,
And after Lancelot, Tristram, and
Geraint
And Gareth, a good knight, but there-
withal
Sir Modred's brother, and the child of
Lot,
Nor often loyal to his word, and
now
Wroth that the King's command to
sally forth
In quest of whom he knew not, made
him leave
The banquet, and concourse of knights
and kings.

So all in wrath he got to horse and
went;
While Arthur to the banquet, dark in
mood,
Past, thinking 'Is it Lancelot who
hath come
Despite the wound he spake of, all for
gain
Of glory, and hath added wound to
wound,
And ridd'n away to die?' So fear'd
the King,
And, after two days' tarriance there,
return'd.
Then when he saw the Queen,
embracing ask'd,
'Love, are you yet so sick?' 'Nay,
lord,' she said.
'And where is Lancelot?' Then the
Queen amazed,
'Was he not with you? won he not
your prize?'
'Nay, but one like him.' 'Why that
like was he.'
And when the King demanded how
she knew,
Said, 'Lord, no sooner had ye parted
from us,
Than Lancelot told me of a common
talk
That men went down before his spear
at a touch,
But knowing he was Lancelot; his
great name

Conquer'd; and therefore would he
hide his name
From all men, ev'n the King, and to
this end
Had made the pretext of a hindering
wound,
That he might joust unknown of all,
and learn
If his old prowess were in aught
decay'd;
And added, 'Our true Arthur, when
he learns,
Will well allow my pretext, as for
gain
Of purer glory.'"

Then replied the King:
'Far lovelier in our Lancelot had it
been,
In lieu of idly dallying with the truth,
To have trusted me as he hath trusted
thee.
Surely his King and most familiar
friend
Might well have kept his secret.
True, indeed,
Albeit I know my knights fantastical,
So fine a fear in our large Lancelot
Must needs have moved my laughter:
now remains
But little cause for laughter: his own
kin—
Ill news, my Queen, for all who love
him, this!—
His kith and kin, not knowing, set
upon him;
So that he went sore wounded from
the field:
Yet good news too: for goodly hopes
are mine
That Lancelot is no more a lonely
heart.
He wore, against his wont, upon his
helm
A sleeve of scarlet, broider'd with
great pearls,
Some gentle maiden's gift.'

'Vea, lord,' she said,
'Thy hopes are mine,' and saying
that, she choked,
And sharply turn'd about to hide her
face,

Past to her chamber, and there flung
herself
Down on the great King's couch, and
writhed upon it,
And clench'd her fingers till they bit
the palm,
And shriek'd out 'Traitor' to the
unhearing wall,
Then flash'd into wild tears, and rose
again,
And moved about her palace, proud
and pale.

Gawain the while thro' all the
region round
Rode with his diamond, wearied of
the quest,
Touch'd at all points, except the
poplar grove,
And came at last, tho' late, to Asto-
lat:
Whom glittering in enamell'd arms
the maid
Glanced at, and cried, 'What news
from Camelot, lord?
What of the knight with the red
sleeve?' 'He won.'
'I knew it,' she said. 'But parted
from the jousts
Hurt in the side,' whereat she caught
her breath;
Thro' her own side she felt the sharp
lance go;
Thereon she smote her hand: well-
nigh she swoon'd:
And, while he gazed wonderingly at
her, came
The Lord of Astolat out, to whom
the Prince
Reported who he was, and on what
quest
Sent, that he bore the prize and could
not find
The victor, but had ridd'n a random
round
To seek him, and had wearied of the
search.
To whom the Lord of Astolat, 'Bide
with us,
And ride no more at random, noble
Prince!
Here was the knight, and here he left
a shield;

This will he send or come for:
furthermore
Our son is with him; we shall hear
anon,
Needs must we hear.' To this the
courteous Prince
Accorded with his wonted courtesy,
Courtesy with a touch of traitor in it,
And stay'd; and cast his eyes on fair
Elaine:
Where could be found face daintier?
then her shape
From forehead down to foot, perfect
—again
From foot to forehead exquisitely
turn'd:
'Well—if I bide, lo! this wild flower
for me!'
And oft they met among the garden
yews,
And there he set himself to play upon
her
With sallying wit, free flashes from a
height
Above her, graces of the court, and
songs,
Sighs, and slow smiles, and golden
eloquence
And amorous adulation, till the maid
Rebell'd against it, saying to him,
'Prince,
O loyal nephew of our noble King,
Why ask you not to see the shield he
left,
Whence you might learn his name?
Why slight your King,
And lose the quest he sent you on,
and prove
No surer than our falcon yesterday,
Who lost the hern we slept her at, and
went
To all the winds?' 'Nay, by mine
head,' said he,
'I lose it, as we lose the lark in
heaven,
O damsel, in the light of your blue
eyes;
But an ye will it let me see the
shield.'
And when the shield was brought,
and Gawain saw
Sir Lancelot's azure lions, crown'd
with gold,

Ramp in the field, he smote his thigh,
and mock'd :
'Right was the King! our Lancelot!
that true man!' :
'And right was I,' she answer'd
merrily, 'I,
Who dream'd my knight the greatest
knight of all.'
'And if I dream'd,' said Gawain,
'that you love
This greatest knight, your pardon!
lo, ye know it!
Speak therefore: shall I waste myself
in vain?'
Full simple was her answer, 'What
know I?
My brethren have been all my fellow-
ship;
And I, when often they have talk'd of
love,
Wish'd it had been my mother, for
they talk'd,
Meseem'd, of what they knew not;
so myself—
I know not if I know what true love
is,
But if I know, then, if I love not
him,
I know there is none other I can love.'
'Yea, by God's death,' said he, 'ye
love him well,
But would not, knew ye what all
others know,
And whom he loves.' 'So be it,'
cried Elaine,
And lifted her fair face and moved
away :
But he pursued her, calling, 'Stay a
little!
One golden minute's grace! he wore
your sleeve :
Would he break faith with one I may
not name?
Must our true man change like a leaf
at last?
Nay—like enow: why then, far be it
from me
To cross our mighty Lancelot in his
loves!
And, damsel, for I deem you know
full well
Where your great knight is hidden, let
me leave

My quest with you; the diamond also:
here!
For if you love, it will be sweet to
give it;
And if he love, it will be sweet to have
it
From your own hand; and whether he
love or not,
A diamond is a diamond. Fare you
well
A thousand times!—a thousand times
farewell!
Yet, if he love, and his love hold, we
two
May meet at court hereafter: there, I
think,
So ye will learn the courtesies of the
court,
We two shall know each other.'

Then he gave,
And slightly kiss'd the hand to which
he gave,
The diamond, and all wearied of the
quest
Leapt on his horse, and carolling as
he went
A true-love ballad, lightly rode away.

Thence to the court he past; there
told the King
What the King knew, 'Sir Lancelot
is the knight.'
And added, 'Sire, my liege, so much I
learnt;
But fail'd to find him tho' I rode all
round
The region: but I lighted on the maid
Whose sleeve he wore; she loves
him; and to her,
Deeming our courtesy is the truest
law,
I gave the diamond: she will render
it;
For by mine head she knows his hid-
ing-place.'

The seldom-frowning King frown'd,
and replied,
'Too courteous truly! ye shall go no
more
On quest of mine, seeing that ye for-
get

Obedience is the courtesy due to kings.'

He spake and parted. Wroth, but all in awe,
For twenty strokes of the blood, without a word,
Linger'd that other, staring after him;
Then shook his hair, strode off, and buzz'd abroad
About the maid of Astolat, and her love.
All ears were prick'd at once, all tongues were loosed.
'The maid of Astolat loves Sir Lancelot,
Sir Lancelot loves the maid of Astolat.'
Some read the King's face, some the Queen's, and all
Had marvel what the maid might be, but most
Predoom'd her as unworthy. One old dame
Came suddenly on the Queen with the sharp news.
She, that had heard the noise of it before,
But sorrowing Lancelot should have have stoop'd so low,
Marr'd her friend's aim with pale tranquillity.
So ran the tale like fire about the court,
Fire in dry stubble a nine-days' wonder flared:
Till ev'n the knights at banquet twice or thrice
Forgot to drink to Lancelot and the Queen,
And pledging Lancelot and the lily maid
Smiled at each other, while the Queen, who sat
With lips severely placid, felt the knot
Climb in her throat, and with her feet unseen
Crush'd the wild passion out against the floor
Beneath the banquet, where the meats became
As wormwood, and she hated all who pledged.

But far away the maid in Astolat,
Her guiltless rival, she that ever kept
The one-day-seen Sir Lancelot in her heart,
Crept to her father, while he mused alone,
Sat on his knee, stroked his gray face and said,
'Father, you call me wilful, and the fault
Is yours who let me have my will, and now,
Sweet father, will you let me lose my wits?
'Nay,' said he, 'surely.' 'Wherefore, let me hence,'
She answer'd, 'and find out our dear Lavaine.'
'Ye will not lose your wits for dear Lavaine:
Bide,' answer'd he: 'we needs must hear anon
Of him, and of that other.' 'Ay,' she said,
'And of that other, for I needs must hence
And find that other, wheresoe'er he be,
And with mine own hand give his diamond to him,
Lest I be found as faithless in the quest
As yon proud Prince who left the quest to me.
Sweet father, I behold him in my dreams
Gaunt as it were the skeleton of himself,
Death-pale, for lack of gentle maiden's aid.
The gentler-born the maiden, the more bound,
My father, to be sweet and serviceable
To noble knights in sickness, as ye know
When these have worn their tokens: let me hence
I pray you.' Then her father nodding said,
'Ay, ay, the diamond: wit ye well, my child,
Right fain were I to learn this knight were whole,

Being our greatest: yea, and you
must give it—
And sure I think this fruit is hung too
high
For any mouth to gape for save a
queen's—
Nay, I mean nothing: so then, get
you gone,
Being so very wilful you must go.'

Lightly, her suit allow'd, she slept
away,
And while she made her ready for her
ride,
Her father's latest word humm'd in
her ear,
'Being so very wilful you must go,'
And changed itself and echo'd in her
heart,
'Being so very wilful you must die.'
But she was happy enough and shook
it off,
As we shake off the bee that buzzes at
us;
And in her heart she answer'd it and
said,
'What matter, so I help him back to
life?'
Then far away with good Sir Torre
for guide
Rode o'er the long backs of the bush-
less downs
To Camelot, and before the city-gates
Came on her brother with a happy face
Making a roan horse caper and curvet
For pleasure all about a field of flow-
ers:
Whom when she saw, 'Lavaine,' she
cried, 'Lavaine,
How fares my lord Sir Lancelot?'
He amazed,
'Torre and Elaine! why here? Sir
Lancelot!
How know ye my lord's name is
Lancelot?'
But when the maid had told him all
her tale,
Then turn'd Sir Torre, and being in
his moods
Left them, and under the strange-
statued gate,
Where Arthur's wars were render'd
mystically,

Past up the still rich city to his kin,
His own far blood, which dwelt at
Camelot;
And her, Lavaine across the poplar
grove
Led to the caves: there first she saw
the casque
Of Lancelot on the wall: her scarlet
sleeve,
Tho' carved and cut, and half the
pearls away,
Stream'd from it still; and in her
heart she laugh'd,
Because he had not loosed it from his
helm,
But meant once more perchance to
tourney in it.
And when they gain'd the cell wherein
he slept,
His battle-writhen arms and mighty
hands
Lay naked on the wolfskin, and a
dream
Of dragging down his enemy made
them move.
Then she that saw him lying unsleek,
unshorn,
Gaunt as it were the skeleton of him-
self,
Utter'd a little tender dolorous cry.
The sound not wonted in a place so
still
Woke the sick knight, and while he
roll'd his eyes
Yet blank from sleep, she started to
him, saying,
'Your prize the diamond sent you by
the King:'
His eyes glisten'd: she fancied 'Is it
for me?'
And when the maid had told him all
the tale
Of King and Prince, the diamond
sent, the quest
Assign'd to her not worthy of it, she
knelt
Full lowly by the corners of his bed,
And laid the diamond in his open
hand.
Her face was near, and as we kiss the
child
That does the task assign'd, he kiss'd
her face.

At once she slipt like water to the floor.
 'Alas,' he said, 'your ride hath wearied you.
 Rest must you have.' 'No rest for me,' she said;
 Nay, for near you, fair lord, I am at rest.
 What might she mean by that? his large black eyes,
 Yet larger thro' his leanness, dwelt upon her,
 Till all her heart's sad secret blazed itself
 In the heart's colors on her simple face;
 And Lancelot look'd and was perplex in mind,
 And being weak in body said no more;
 But did not love the color; woman's love,
 Save one, he not regarded, and so turn'd
 Sighing, and feign'd a sleep until he slept.

Then rose Elaine and glided thro' the fields,
 And past beneath the weirdly-sculptured gates
 Far up the dim rich city to her kin;
 There bode the night: but woke with dawn, and past
 Down thro' the dim rich city to the fields,
 Thence to the cave: so day by day she past
 In either twilight ghost-like to and fro
 Gliding, and every day she tended him,
 And likewise many a night: and Lancelot
 Would, tho' he call'd his wound a little hurt
 Whereof he should be quickly whole, at times
 Brain-feverous in his heat and agony, seem
 Uncourteous, even he: but the meek maid
 Sweetly forbore him ever, being to him

Meeker than any child to a rough nurse,
 Milder than any mother to a sick child,
 And never woman yet, since man's first fall,
 Did kindlier unto man, but her deep love
 Upbore her; till the hermit, skill'd in all
 The simples and the science of that time,
 Told him that her fine care had saved his life.
 And the sick man forgot her simple blush,
 Would call her friend and sister, sweet Elaine,
 Would listen for her coming and regret
 Her parting step, and held her tenderly,
 And loved her with all love except the love
 Of man and woman when they love their best,
 Closest and sweetest, and had died the death
 In any knightly fashion for her sake.
 And peradventure had he seen her first
 She might have made this and that other world
 Another world for the sick man; but now
 The shackles of an old love straiten'd him,
 His honor rooted in dishonor stood,
 And faith unfaithful kept him falsely true.

Yet the great knight in his mid-sickness made
 Full many a holy vow and pure resolve.
 These, as but born of sickness, could not live:
 For when the blood ran lustier in him again,
 Full often the bright image of one face,
 Making a treacherous quiet in his heart,

Dispersed his resolution like a cloud.
Then if the maiden, while that
ghostly grace
Beam'd on his fancy, spoke, he
answer'd not,
Or short and coldly, and she knew
right well
What the rough sickness meant, but
what this meant
She knew not, and the sorrow dimm'd
her sight,
And drove her ere her time across the
fields
Far into the rich city, where alone
She murmur'd, 'Vain, in vain: it
cannot be.
He will not love me: how then?
must I die?'
Then as a little helpless innocent
bird,
That has but one plain passage of few
notes,
Will sing the simple passage o'er and
o'er
For all an April morning, till the ear
Wearies to hear it, so the simple
maid
Went half the night repeating, 'Must
I die?'
And now to right she turn'd, and now
to left,
And found no ease in turning or in
rest;
And 'Him or death,' she mutter'd,
'death or him,'
Again and like a burthen, 'Him or
death.'

But when Sir Lancelot's deadly
hurt was whole,
To Astolat returning rode the three.
There morn by morn, arraying her
sweet self
In that wherein she deem'd she look'd
her best,
She came before Sir Lancelot, for she
thought
'If I be loved, these are my festal
robes,
If not, the virgin's flowers before he
fall.'
And Lancelot ever prest upon the
maid

That she should ask some goodly gift
of him
For her own self or hers; 'and do
not shun
To speak the wish most near to your
true heart;
Such service have ye done me, that I
make
My will of yours, and Prince and
Lord am I
In mine own land, and what I will I
can.'
Then like a ghost she lifted up her face,
But like a ghost without the power to
speak.
And Lancelot saw that she withheld
her wish,
And bode among them yet a little
space
Till he should learn it; and one morn
it chanced
He found her in among the garden
yews,
And said, 'Delay no longer, speak
your wish,
Seeing I go to-day:' then out she
brake:
'Going? and we shall never see you
more.
And I must die for want of one bold
word.'
'Speak: that I live to hear,' he said,
'is yours.'
Then suddenly and passionately she
spoke:
'I have gone mad. I love you: let
me die.'
'Ah, sister,' answer'd Lancelot, 'what
is this?'
And innocently extending her white
arms,
'Your love,' she said, 'your love—to
be your wife.'
And Lancelot answer'd, 'Had I
chosen to wed,
I had been wedded earlier, sweet
Elaine:
But now there never will be wife of
mine.'
'No, no,' she cried, 'I care not to be
wife,
But to be with you still, to see your
face,

To serve you, and to follow you thro'
the world.'

And Lancelot answer'd, 'Nay, the
world, the world,

All ear and eye, with such a stupid
heart

To interpret ear and eye, and such a
tongue

To blare its own interpretation—nay,
Full ill then should I quit your
brother's love,

And your good father's kindness.'
And she said,

'Not to be with you, not to see your
face—

Alas for me then, my good days are
done.'

'Nay, noble maid,' he answer'd, 'ten
times nay!

This is not love: but love's first flash
in youth,

Most common: yea, I know it of
mine own self:

And you yourself will smile at your
own self

Hereafter, when you yield your flower
of life

To one more fitly yours, not thrice
your age:

And then will I, for true you are and
sweet

Beyond mine old belief in womanhood,
More specially should your good
knight be poor,

Endow you with broad land and terri-
tory

Even to the half my realm beyond the
seas,

So that would make you happy: fur-
thermore,

Ev'n to the death, as tho' ye were my
blood,

In all your quarrels will I be your
knight.

This will I do, dear damsel, for your
sake,

And more than this I cannot.'

While he spoke
She neither blush'd nor shook, but
deathly-pale

Stood grasping what was nearest, then
replied:

'Of all this will I nothing;' and so
fell,

And thus they bore her swooning to
her tower.

Then spake, to whom thro' those
black walls of yew

Their talk had pierced, her father:
'Ay, a flash,

I fear me, that will strike my blossom
dead.

Too courteous are ye, fair Lord Lance-
lot.

I pray you, use some rough discour-
tesy

To blunt or break her passion.'

Lancelot said,
'That were against me: what I can I
will;'

And there that day remain'd, and to-
ward even

Sent for his shield: full meekly rose
the maid,

Stript off the case, and gave the naked
shield;

Then, when she heard his horse upon
the stones,

Unclasping flung the casement back,
and look'd

Down on his helm, from which her
sleeve had gone.

And Lancelot knew the little clinking
sound;

And she by tact of love was well aware
That Lancelot knew that she was look-
ing at him.

And yet he glanced not up, nor waved
his hand,

Nor bad farewell, but sadly rode
away.

This was the one discourtesy that he
used.

So in her tower alone the maiden sat:
His very shield was gone; only the

case,
Her own poor work, her empty labor,

left.

But still she heard him, still his pic-
ture form'd

And grew between her and the pic-
tured wall.

Then came her father, saying in low tones,
'Have comfort,' whom she greeted quietly.
Then came her brethren saying, 'Peace to thee,
Sweet sister,' whom she answer'd with all calm.
But when they left her to herself again,
Death, like a friend's voice from a distant field
Approaching thro' the darkness, call'd; the owls
Wailing had power upon her, and she mixt
Her fancies with the sorrow-rifted glooms
Of evening, and the moanings of the wind.

And in those days she made a little song,
And call'd her song 'The Song of Love and Death,'
And sang it: sweetly could she make and sing.

'Sweet is true love tho' given in vain, in vain;
And sweet is death who puts an end to pain:
I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.

'Love, art thou sweet? then bitter death must be:
Love, thou art bitter; sweet is death to me.
O Love, if death be sweeter, let me die.

'Sweet love, that seems not made to fade away,
Sweet death, that seems to make us loveless clay,
I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.

'I fain would follow love, if that could be;
I needs must follow death, who calls for me;
Call and I follow, I follow! let me die.'

High with the last line scaled her voice, and this,
All in a fiery dawning wild with wind
That shook her tower, the brothers heard, and thought
With shuddering, 'Hark the Phantom of the house
That ever shrieks before a death,' and call'd
The father, and all three in hurry and fear
Ran to her, and lo! the blood-red light of dawn
Flared on her face, she shrilling, 'Let me die!'

As when we dwell upon a word we know,
Repeating, till the word we know so well
Becomes a wonder, and we know not why,
So dwelt the father on her face, and thought
'Is this Elaine?' till back the maiden fell,
Then gave a languid hand to each, and lay,
Speaking a still good-morrow with her eyes.
At last she said, 'Sweet brothers, yesternight
I seem'd a curious little maid again,
As happy as when we dwelt among the woods,
And when ye used to take me with the flood
Up the great river in the boatman's boat.
Only ye would not pass beyond the cape
That has the poplar on it: there ye fixt
Your limit, oft returning with the tide.
And yet I cried because ye would not pass
Beyond it, and far up the shining flood
Until we found the palace of the King.
And yet ye would not; but this night
I dream'd
That I was all alone upon the flood,
And then I said, "Now shall I have my will:"'

And there I woke, but still the wish
remain'd.
So let me hence that I may pass at
last
Beyond the poplar and far up the
flood,
Until I find the palace of the King.
There will I enter in among them all,
And no man there will dare to mock
at me;
But there the fine Gawain will wonder
at me,
And there the great Sir Lancelot
muse at me;
Gawain, who had a thousand farewells
to me,
Lancelot, who coldly went, nor bad
me one:
And there the King will know me and
my love,
And there the Queen herself will pity
me,
And all the gentle court will welcome
me,
And after my long voyage I shall
rest!

'Peace,' said her father, 'O my
child, ye seem
Light-headed, for what force is yours
to go
So far, being sick? and wherefore
would ye look
On this proud fellow again, who scorns
us all?'

Then the rough Torre began to
heave and move,
And bluster into stormy sobs and say,
'I never loved him: an I meet with
him,
I care not howsoever great he be,
Then will I strike at him and strike
him down,
Give me good fortune, I will strike
him dead,
For this discomfort he hath done the
house.'

To whom the gentle sister made
reply,
'Fret not yourself, dear brother, nor
be wroth,

Seeing it is no more Sir Lancelot's
fault
Not to love me, than it is mine to love
Him of all men who seems to me the
highest.'

'Highest?' the father answer'd,
echoing 'highest?'
(He meant to break the passion in
her) 'nay,
Daughter, I know not what you call
the highest;
But this I know, for all the people
know it,
He loves the Queen, and in an open
shame:
And she returns his love in open
shame;
If this be high, what is it to be low?'

Then spake the lily maid of Asto-
lat:
'Sweet father, all too faint and sick
am I
For anger: these are slanders: never
yet
Was noble man but made ignoble
talk.
He makes no friend who never made
a foe.
But now it is my glory to have loved
One peerless, without stain: so let me
pass,
My father, howsoever I seem to you,
Not all unhappy, having loved God's
best
And greatest, tho' my love had no
return:
Yet, seeing you desire your child to
live,
Thanks, but you work against your
own desire;
For if I could believe the things you
say
I should but die the sooner; where-
fore cease,
Sweet father, and bid call the ghostly
man
Hither, and let me shrive me clean,
and die.'

So when the ghostly man had come
and gone,

She with a face, bright as for sin forgiven,
Besought Lavaine to write as she devised
A letter, word for word; and when he ask'd

'Is it for Lancelot, is it for my dear lord?

Then will I bear it gladly,' she replied,

'For Lancelot and the Queen and all the world,

But I myself must bear it.' Then he wrote

The letter she devised; which being writ

And folded, 'O sweet father, tender and true,

Deny me not,' she said—'ye never yet Denied my fancies—this, however strange,

My latest: lay the letter in my hand A little ere I die, and close the hand

Upon it; I shall guard it even in death.

And when the heat is gone from out my heart,

Then take the little bed on which I died

For Lancelot's love, and deck it like the Queen's

For richness, and me also like the Queen

In all I have of rich, and lay me on it. And let there be prepared a chariot-bier

To take me to the river, and a barge Be ready on the river, clothed in black.

I go in state to court, to meet the Queen.

There surely I shall speak for mine own self,

And none of you can speak for me so well.

And therefore let our dumb old man alone

Go with me, he can steer and row, and he

Will guide me to that palace, to the doors.'

She ceased: her father promised; whereupon

She grew so cheerful that they deem'd her death

Was rather in the fantasy than the blood.

But ten slow mornings past, and on the eleventh

Her father laid the letter in her hand, And closed the hand upon it, and she died.

So that day there was dole in Astolat.

But when the next sun brake from underground,

Then, those two brethren slowly with bent brows

Accompanying, the sad chariot-bier Past like a shadow thro' the field, that shone

Full-summer, to that stream whereon the barge,

Pall'd all its length in blackest samite, lay.

There sat the lifelong creature of the house,

Loyal, the dumb old servitor, on deck, Winking his eyes, and twisted all his face.

So those two brethren from the chariot took

And on the black decks laid her in her bed,

Set in her hand a lily, o'er her hung The silken case with braided blazonings,

And kiss'd her quiet brows, and saying to her

'Sister, farewell for ever,' and again 'Farewell, sweet sister,' parted all in tears.

Then rose the dumb old servitor, and the dead,

Oar'd by the dumb, went upward with the flood—

In her right hand the lily, in her left The letter—all her bright hair streaming down—

And all the coverlid was cloth of gold Drawn to her waist, and she herself in white

All but her face, and that clear-featured face

Was lovely, for she did not seem as dead,

But fast asleep, and lay as tho' she
smiled.

That day Sir Lancelot at the palace
craved
Audience of Guinevere, to give at
last
The price of half a realm, his costly
gift,
Hard-won and hardly won with bruise
and blow,
With deaths of others, and almost his
own,
The nine-years-fought-for diamonds:
for he saw
One of her house, and sent him to the
Queen
Bearing his wish, whereto the Queen
agreed
With such and so unmoved a majesty
She might have seem'd her statue, but
that he,
Low-drooping till he wellnigh kiss'd
her feet
For loyal awe, saw with a sidelong eye
The shadow of some piece of pointed
lace,
In the Queen's shadow, vibrate on the
walls,
And parted, laughing in his courtly
heart.

All in an oriel on the summer side,
Vine-clad, of Arthur's palace toward
the stream,
They met, and Lancelot kneeling
utter'd, 'Queen,
Lady, my liege, in whom I have my
joy,
Take, what I had not won except for
you,
These jewels, and make me happy,
making them
An armlet for the roundest arm on
earth,
Or necklace for a neck to which the
swan's
Is tawnier than her cygnet's: these
are words:
Your beauty is your beauty, and I
sin
In speaking, yet O grant my worship
of it

Words, as we grant grief tears. Such
sin in words
Perchance, we both can pardon: but,
my Queen,
I hear of rumors flying thro' your
court.
Our bond, as not the bond of man
and wife,
Should have in it an absoluter trust
To make up that defect: let rumors
be:
When did not rumors fly? these, as I
trust
That you trust me in your own noble-
ness,
I may not well believe that you
believe.'

While thus he spoke, half turn'd
away, the Queen
Brake from the vast oriel-embowering
vine
Leaf after leaf, and tore, and cast
them off,
Till all the place whereon she stood
was green;
Then, when he ceased, in one cold
passive hand
Received at once and laid aside the
gems
There on a table near her, and
replied:

'It may be, I am quicker of belief
Than you believe me, Lancelot of the
Lake.
Our bond is not the bond of man and
wife.
This good is in it, whatso'er of
ill,
It can be broken easier. I for you
This many a year have done despite
and wrong
To one whom ever in my heart of
hearts
I did acknowledge nobler. What are
these?
Diamonds for me! they had been
thrice their worth
Being your gift, had you not lost your
own.
To loyal hearts the value of all
gifts

"THEY BORE UP THE BROAD STAIRS."—Page 79.





Must vary as the giver's. Not for
me!
For her! for your new fancy. Only
this
Grant me, I pray you: have your
joys apart.
I doubt not that however changed,
you keep
So much of what is graceful: and
myself
Would shun to break those bounds of
courtesy
In which as Arthur's Queen I move
and rule:
So cannot speak my mind. An end to
this!
A strange one! yet I take it with
Amen.
So pray you, add my diamonds to her
pearls;
Deck her with these; tell her, she
shines me down:
An armlet for an arm to which the
Queen's
Is haggard, or a necklace for a neck
O as much fairer—as a faith once
fair
Was richer than these diamonds—
hers not mine—
Nay, by the mother of our Lord him-
self,
Or hers or mine, mine now to work
my will—
She shall not have them.'

Saying which she seized,
And, thro' the casement standing
wide for heat,
Flung them, and down they flash'd,
and smote the stream.
Then from the smitten surface flash'd,
as it were,
Diamonds to meet them, and they
past away.
Then while Sir Lancelot leant, in half
disdain
At love, life, all things, on the window
ledge,
Close underneath his eyes, and right
across
Where these had fallen, slowly past
the barge
Whereon the lily maid of Astolat

Lay smiling, like a star in blackest
night.

But the wild Queen, who saw not,
burst away
To weep and wail in secret; and the
barge,
On to the palace-doorway sliding,
paused.
There two stood arm'd, and kept the
door; to whom,
All up the marble stair, tier over tier,
Were added mouths that gaped, and
eyes that ask'd
'What is it?' but that oarsman's
haggard face,
As hard and still as is the face that
men
Shape to their fancy's eye from
broken rocks
On some cliff-side, appall'd them, and
they said,
'He is enchanted, cannot speak—and
she,
Look how she sleeps—the Fairy
Queen, so fair!
Yea, but how pale! what are they?
flesh and blood?
Or come to take the King to Fairy-
land?
For some do hold our Arthur cannot
die,
But that he passes into Fairyland.'

While thus they babbled of the
King, the King
Came girt with knights: then turn'd
the tongueless man
From the half-face to the full eye,
and rose
And pointed to the damsel, and the
doors.
So Arthur bad the meek Sir Percivale
And pure Sir Galahad to uplift the
maid;
And reverently they bore her into
hall.
Then came the fine Gawain and
wonder'd at her,
And Lancelot later came and mused
at her,
And last the Queen herself, and pitied
her:

But Arthur spied the letter in her hand,
Stooped, took, brake seal, and read it;
this was all:

'Most noble lord, Sir Lancelot of the Lake,
I, sometime call'd the maid of Astolat,
Come, for you left me taking no farewell,
Hither, to take my last farewell of you.
I loved you, and my love had no return,
And therefore my true love has been my death.
And therefore to our Lady Guinevere,
And to all other ladies, I make moan:
Pray for my soul, and yield me burial.
Pray for my soul thou too, Sir Lancelot,
As thou art a knight peerless.'

Thus he read;
And ever in the reading, lords and dames
Wept, looking often from his face who read
To hers which lay so silent, and at times,
So touch'd were they, half-thinking that her lips,
Who had devised the letter, moved again.

Then freely spoke Sir Lancelot to them all:
'My lord liege Arthur, and all ye that hear,
Know that for this most gentle maiden's death
Right heavy am I; for good she was and true,
But loved me with a love beyond all love
In women, whomsoever I have known.
Yet to be loved makes not to love again;
Not at any years, however it hold in youth.

I swear by truth and knighthood that I gave
No cause, not willingly, for such a love:
To this I call my friends in testimony,
Her brethren, and her father, who himself
Besought me to be plain and blunt, and use,
To break her passion, some discourtesy
Against my nature: what I could, I did.
I left her and I bade her no farewell;
Tho', had I dreamt the damsel would have died,
I might have put my wits to some rough use,
And help'd her from herself.'

Then said the Queen
(Sea was her wrath, yet working after storm)
'Ye might at least have done her so much grace,
Fair lord, as would have help'd her from her death.'
He raised his head, their eyes met and hers fell,
He adding,
'Queen, she would not be content
Save that I wedded her, which could not be.
Then might she follow me thro' the world, she ask'd;
It could not be. I told her that her love
Was but the flash of youth, would darken down
To rise hereafter in a stiller flame
Toward one more worthy of her—then would I,
More specially were he, she wedded, poor,
Estate them with large land and territory
In mine own realm beyond the narrow seas,
To keep them in all joyance: more than this
I could not; this she would not, and she died.'

He pausing, Arthur answer'd, 'O
my knight,
It will be to thy worship, as my
knight,
And mine, as head of all our Table
Round,
To see that she be buried worship-
fully.'

So toward that shrine which then in
all the realm
Was richest, Arthur leading, slowly
went
The marshall'd Order of their Table
Round,
And Lancelot sad beyond his wont, to
see
The maiden buried, not as one
unknown,
Nor meanly, but with gorgeous obse-
quies,
And mass, and rolling music, like a
queen.
And when the knights had laid her
comely head
Low in the dust of half-forgotten
kings,
Then Arthur spake among them, 'Let
her tomb
Be costly, and her image thereupon,
And let the shield of Lancelot at her
feet
Be carven, and her lily in her hand.
And let the story of her dolorous
voyage
For all true hearts be blazon'd on her
tomb
In letters gold and azure !' which was
wrought
Thereafter; but when now the lords
and dames
And people, from the high door
streaming, brake
Disorderly, as homeward each, the
Queen,
Who mark'd Sir Lancelot where he
moved apart,
Drew near, and sigh'd in passing,
'Lancelot,
Forgive me; mine was jealousy in
love.'
He answer'd with his eyes upon the
ground,

'That is love's curse; pass on, my
Queen, forgiven.'
But Arthur, who beheld his cloudy
brows,
Approach'd him, and with full affec-
tion said,

'Lancelot, my Lancelot, thou in
whom I have
Most joy and most affiance, for I know
What thou hast been in battle by my
side,
And many a time have watch'd thee
at the tilt
Strike down the lusty and long prac-
tised knight,
And let the younger and unskill'd go
by
To win his honor and to make his
name,
And loved thy courtesies and thee, a
man
Made to be loved; but now I would
to God,
Seeing the homeless trouble in thine
eyes,
Thou couldst have loved this maiden,
shaped, it seems,
By God for thee alone, and from her
face,
If one may judge the living by the
dead,
Delicately pure and marvellously fair,
Who might have brought thee, now a
lonely man
Wifeless and heirless, noble issue,
sons
Born to the glory of thy name and
fame,
My knight, the great Sir Lancelot of
the Lake.

Then answer'd Lancelot, 'Fair she
was, my King,
Pure, as you ever wish your knights
to be.
To doubt her fairness were to want an
eye,
To doubt her pureness were to want a
heart—
Yea, to be loved, if what is worthy love
Could bind him, but free love will not
be bound.'

'Free love, so bound, were freest,'
said the King.
'Let love be free; free love is for the
best:
And, after heaven, on our dull side of
death,
What should be best, if not so pure a
love
Clothed in so pure a loveliness? yet
thee
She fail'd to bind, tho' being, as I
think,
Unbound as yet, and gentle, as I
know.'

And Lancelot answer'd nothing, but
he went,
And at the inrunning of a little brook
Sat by the river in a cove, and
watch'd
The high reed wave, and lifted up his
eyes
And saw the barge that brought her
moving down,
Far-off, a blot upon the stream, and
said
Low in himself, 'Ah simple heart and
sweet,
Ye loved me, damsel, surely with a
love
Far tenderer than my Queen's. Pray
for thy soul?
Ay, that will I. Farewell too—now at
last—
Farewell, fair lily. "Jealousy in
love?"
Not rather dead love's harsh heir,
jealous pride?
Queen, if I grant the jealousy as of
love,
May not your crescent fear for name
and fame
Speak, as it waxes, of a love that
waned?
Why did the King dwell on my name
to me?
Mine own name shames me, seeming a
reproach,
Lancelot, whom the Lady of the Lake
Caught from his mother's arms—the
wondrous one
Who passes thro' the vision of the
night—

She chanted snatches of mysterious
hymns
Heard on the winding waters, eve and
morn
She kiss'd me saying, "Thou art fair,
my child,
As a king's son," and often in her
arms
She bare me, pacing on the dusky
mere.
Would she had drown'd me in it,
where'er it be!
For what am I? what profits me my
name
Of greatest knight? I fought for it,
and have it:
Pleasure to have it, none; to lose it,
pain;
Now grown a part of me: but what
use in it?
To make men worse by making my
sin known?
Or sin seem less, the sinner seeming
great?
Alas for Arthur's greatest knight, a
man
Not after Arthur's heart! I needs
must break
These bonds that so defame me: not
without
She wills it: would I, if she will'd it?
nay,
Who knows? but if I would not, then
may God,
I pray him, send a sudden Angel down
To seize me by the hair and bear me
far,
And fling me deep in that forgotten
mere,
Among the tumbled fragments of the
hills.'

So groan'd Sir Lancelot in remorse-
ful pain,
Not knowing he should die a holy
man.

THE HOLY GRAIL.

FROM noiseful arms, and acts of
prowess done
In tournament or tilt, Sir Percivale,

Whom Arthur and his knighthood
call'd The Pure,
Had pass'd into the silent life of
prayer,
Praise, fast, and alms; and leaving for
the cowl
The helmet in an abbey far away
From Camelot, there, and not long
after, died.

And one, a fellow-monk among the
rest,
Ambrosius, loved him much beyond
the rest,
And honor'd him, and wrought into
his heart
A way by love that waken'd love within,
To answer that which came: and as
they sat
Beneath a world-old yew-tree, darken-
ing half
The cloisters, on a gustful April morn
That puff'd the swaying branches
into smoke
Above them, ere the summer when he
died,
The monk Ambrosius question'd Per-
civale:

'O brother, I have seen this yew-
tree smoke,
Spring after spring, for half a hun-
dred years:
For never have I known the world
without,
Nor ever stray'd beyond the pale:
but thee,
When first thou camest—such a
courtesy
Spake thro' the limbs and in the
voice—I knew
For one of those who eat in Arthur's
hall;
For good ye are and bad, and like to
coins,
Some true, some light, but every one
of you
Stamp'd with the image of the King;
and now
Tell me, what drove thee from the
Table Round,
My brother? was it earthly passion
crost?'

'Nay,' said the knight; 'for no
such passion mine.
But the sweet vision of the Holy
Grail
Drove me from all vainglories, rival-
ries,
And earthly heats that spring and
sparkle out
Among us in the jousts, while women
watch
Who wins, who fails; and waste the
spiritual strength
Within us, better offer'd up to
Heaven.'

To whom the monk: 'The Holy
Grail!—I trust
We are green in Heaven's eyes; but
here too much
We moulder—as to things without I
mean—
Yet one of your own knights, a guest of
ours,
Told us of this in our refectory,
But spake with such a sadness and so
low
We heard not half of what he said.
What is it?
The phantom of a cup that comes and
goes?'

'Nay, monk! what phantom?' an-
swer'd Percivale.
'The cup, the cup itself, from which
our Lord
Drank at the last sad supper with his
own.
This, from the blessed land of Aro-
mat—
After the day of darkness, when the
dead
Went wandering o'er Moriah—the
good saint
Arimathæan Joseph, journeying
brought
To Glastonbury, where the winter
thorn
Blossoms at Christmas, mindful of
our Lord.
And there awhile it bode; and if a
man
Could touch or see it, he was heal'd
at once,

By faith, of all his ills. But then the
times
Grew to such evil that the holy cup
Was caught away to Heaven, and
disappear'd.

To whom the monk: 'From our
old books I know
That Joseph came of old to Glaston-
bury,
And there the heathen Prince, Arvi-
ragus,
Gave him an isle of marsh whereon to
build;
And there he built with wattles from
the marsh
A little lonely church in days of
yore,
For so they say, these books of ours,
but seem
Mute of this miracle, far as I have
read.
But who first saw the holy thing to-
day?'

'A woman,' answer'd Percivale, 'a
nun,
And one no further off in blood from
me
Than sister; and if ever holy maid
With knees of adoration wore the
stone,
A holy maid; tho' never maiden
glow'd,
But that was in her earlier maiden-
hood,
With such a fervent flame of human
love,
Which being rudely blunted, glanced
and shot
Only to holy things; to prayer and
praise
She gave herself, to fast and alms.
And yet,
Nun as she was, the scandal of the
Court,
Sin against Arthur and the Table
Round,
And the strange sound of an adulter-
ous race,
Across the iron grating of her cell
Beat, and she pray'd and fasted all
the more.

'And he to whom she told her sins,
or what
Her all but utter whiteness held for
sin,
A man wellnigh a hundred winters
old,
Spake often with her of the Holy
Grail,
A legend handed down thro' five or
six,
And each of these a hundred winters
old,
From our Lord's time. And when
King Arthur made
His Table Round, and all men's
hearts became
Clean for a season, surely he had
thought
That now the Holy Grail would come
again;
But sin broke out. Ah, Christ, that
it would come,
And heal the world of all their wicked-
ness!
"O Father!" asked the maiden,
"might it come
To me by prayer and fasting?"
"Nay," said he,
"I know not, for thy heart is pure as
snow."
And so she pray'd and fasted, till the
sun
Shone, and the wind blew, thro' her,
and I thought
She might have risen and floated when
I saw her.

'For on a day she sent to speak
with me.
And when she came to speak, behold
her eyes
Beyond my knowing of them, beauti-
ful,
Beyond all knowing of them, wonder-
ful,
Beautiful in the light of holiness.
And "O my brother Percivale," she
said,
"Sweet brother, I have seen the Holy
Grail:
For, waked at dead of night, I heard
a sound
As of a silver horn from o'er the hills

Blown, and I thought, 'It is not
Arthur's use
To hunt by moonlight;' and the
slender sound
As from a distance beyond distance
grew
Coming upon me—O never harp nor
horn,
Nor aught we blow with breath, or
touch with hand,
Was like that music as it came; and
then
Stream'd thro' my cell a cold and
silver beam,
And down the long beam stole the
Holy Grail,
Rose-red with beatings in it, as if
alive,
Till all the white walls of my cell were
died
With rosy colors leaping on the wall:
And then the music faded, and the
Grail
Past, and the beam decay'd, and from
the walls
The rosy quiverings died into the
night.
So now the Holy Thing is here again
Among us, brother, fast thou too and
pray,
And tell thy brother knights to fast
and pray,
That so perchance the vision may be
seen
By thee and those, and all the world
be heal'd."

'Then leaving the pale nun, I
spake of this
To all men; and myself fasted and
pray'd
Always, and many among us many a
week
Fasted and pray'd even to the utter-
most,
Expectant of the wonder that would
be.

'And one there was among us,
ever moved
Among us in white armor, Galahad.
"God make thee good as thou art
beautiful,"

Said Arthur, when he dubb'd him
knight; and none,
In so young youth, was ever made a
knight
Till Galahad; and this Galahad, when
he heard
My sister's vision, fill'd me with
amaze;
His eyes became so like her own,
they seem'd
Hers, and himself her brother more
than I.

'Sister or brother none had he;
but some
Call'd him a son of Lancelot, and
some said
Begotten by enchantment—chatterers
they,
Like birds of passage piping up and
down,
That gape for flies—we know not
whence they come;
For when was Lancelot wanderingly
lewd?

'But she, the wan sweet maiden,
shore away
Clean from her forehead all that
wealth of hair
Which made a silken mat-work for her
feet;
And out of this she plaited broad and
long
A strong sword-belt, and wove with
silver thread
And crimson in the belt a strange
device,
A crimson grail within a silver beam,
And saw the bright boy-knight, and
bound it on him,
Saying, "My knight, my love, my
knight of heaven,
O thou, my love, whose love is one
with mine,
I, maiden, round thee, maiden, bind
my belt.
Go forth, for thou shalt see what I
have seen,
And break thro' all, till one will crown
thee king
Far in the spiritual city:" and as she
spake

She sent the deathless passion in her
 eyes
 Thro' him, and made him hers, and
 laid her mind
 On him, and he believed in her belief.

'Then came a year of miracle: O
 brother,
 In our great hall there stood a vacant
 chair,
 Fashion'd by Merlin ere he past away,
 And carven with strange figures; and
 in and out
 The figures, like a serpent, ran a scroll
 Of letters in a tongue no man could
 read.
 And Merlin call'd it "The Siege per-
 ilous,"
 Perilous for good and ill; "for there,"
 he said,
 "No man could sit but he should lose
 himself:"
 And once by misadventure Merlin
 sat
 In his own chair, and so was lost;
 but he,
 Galahad, when he heard of Merlin's
 doom,
 Cried, "If I lose myself, I save my-
 self!"

'Then on a summer night it came
 to pass,
 While the great banquet lay along the
 hall,
 That Galahad would sit down in Mer-
 lin's chair.

'And all at once, as there we sat,
 we heard
 A cracking and a riving of the roofs,
 And rending, and a blast, and over-
 head
 Thunder, and in the thunder was a
 cry.
 And in the blast there smote along the
 hall
 A beam of light seven times more
 clear than day:
 And down the long beam stole the
 Holy Grail
 All over cover'd with a luminous
 cloud,

And none might see who bare it, and
 it past.
 But every knight beheld his fellow's
 face
 As in a glory, and all the knights
 arose,
 And staring each at other like dumb
 nien
 Stood, till I found a voice and sware
 a vow.

'I sware a vow before them all, that
 I,
 Because I had not seen the Grail,
 would ride
 A twelvemonth and a day in quest of
 it,
 Until I found and saw it, as the
 nun
 My sister saw it; and Galahad sware
 the vow,
 And good Sir Bors, our Lancelot's
 cousin, sware,
 And Lancelot sware, and many among
 the knights,
 And Gawain sware, and louder than
 the rest.'

Then spake the monk Ambrosius,
 asking him,
 'What said the King? Did Arthur
 take the vow?'

'Nay, for my lord,' said Percivale,
 'the King,
 Was not in hall: for early that same
 day,
 Scaped thro' a cavern from a bandit
 hold,
 An outraged maiden sprang into the
 hall
 Crying on help: for all her shining
 hair
 Was smear'd with earth, and either
 milky arm
 Red-rent with hooks of bramble, and
 all she wore
 Torn as a sail that leaves the rope is
 torn
 In tempest: so the King arose and
 went
 To smoke the scandalous hive of
 those wild bees

That made such honey in his realm.
Howbeit
Some little of this marvel he too
saw,
Returning o'er the plain that then
began
To darken under Camelot; whence
the King
Look'd up, calling aloud, "Lo, there!
the roofs
Of our great hall are roll'd in thunder-
smoke!
Pray Heaven, they be not smitten by
the bolt."
For dear to Arthur was that hall of
ours,
As having there so oft with all his
knights
Feasted, and as the stateliest under
heaven.

'O brother, had you known our
mighty hall,
Which Merlin built for Arthur long
ago!
For all the sacred mount of Came-
lot,
And all the dim rich city, roof by
roof,
Tower after tower, spire beyond spire,
By grove, and garden-lawn, and rush-
ing brook,
Climbs to the mighty hall that Merlin
built.
And four great zones of sculpture, set
betwixt
With many a mystic symbol, gird the
hall:
And in the lowest beasts are slaying
men,
And in the second men are slaying
beasts,
And on the third are warriors, perfect
men,
And on the fourth are men with grow-
ing wings,
And over all one statue in the mould
Of Arthur, made by Merlin, with a
crown,
And peak'd wings pointed to the
Northern Star.
And eastward fronts the statue, and
the crown

And both the wings are made of gold,
and flame
At sunrise till the people in far fields,
Wasted so often by the heathen
hordes,
Behold it, crying, "We have still a
King."

'And, brother, had you known our
hall within,
Broader and higher than any in all the
lands!
Where twelve great windows blazon
Arthur's wars,
And all the light that falls upon the
board
Streams thro' the twelve great battles
of our King.
Nay, one there is, and at the eastern
end,
Wealthy with wandering lines of
mount and mere,
Where Arthur finds the brand Excali-
bur.
And also one to the west, and counter
to it,
And blank: and who shall blazon it?
when and how?—
O there, perchance, when all our wars
are done,
The brand Excalibur will be cast
away.

'So to this hall full quickly rode the
King,
In horror lest the work by Merlin
wrought,
Dreamlike, should on the sudden
vanish, wrapt
In unremorseful folds of rolling fire.
And in he rode, and up I glanced, and
saw
The golden dragon sparkling over all:
And many of those who burnt the
hold, their arms
Hack'd, and their foreheads grimed
with smoke, and sear'd,
Follow'd, and in among bright faces,
ours,
Full of the vision, prest: and then
the King
Spake to me, being nearest, "Perci-
vale,"

(Because the hall was all in tumult—
some
Vowing, and some protesting), "what
is this?"

"O brother, when I told him what
had chanced,
My sister's vision, and the rest, his
face
Darken'd, as I have seen it more than
once,
When some brave deed seem'd to be
done in vain,
Darken; and "Woe is me, my
knights," he cried,
"Had I been here, ye had not sworn
the vow."
Bold was mine answer, "Had thyself
been here,
My King, thou wouldst have sworn."
"Yea, yea," said he,
"Art thou so bold and hast not seen
the Grail?"

"Nay, lord, I heard the sound, I
saw the light,
But since I did not see the Holy
Thing,
I swear a vow to follow it till I saw."

"Then when he ask'd us, knight by
knight, if any
Had seen it, all their answers were as
one:
"Nay, lord, and therefore have we
sworn our vows."

"Lo now," said Arthur, "have ye
seen a cloud?
What go ye into the wilderness to
see?"

"Then Galahad on the sudden, and
in a voice
Shrilling along the hall to Arthur,
call'd,

"But I, Sir Arthur, saw the Holy
Grail,
I saw the Holy Grail and heard a
cry—

"O Galahad, and O Galahad, follow
me."

"Ah, Galahad, Galahad," said the
King, "for such
As thou art is the vision, not for
these.

Thy holy nun and thou have seen a
sign—

Holier is none, my Percivale, than
she—

A sign to maim this Order which I
made.

But ye, that follow but the leader's
bell "

(Brother, the King was hard upon his
knights)

"Taliessin is our fullest throat of
song,

And one hath sung and all the dumb
will sing.

Lancelot is Lancelot, and hath over-
borne

Five knights at once, and every
younger knight,

Unproven, holds himself as Lance-
lot,

Till overborne by one, he learns—and
ye,

What are ye? Galahads?—no, nor
Percivales "

(For thus it pleased the King to
range me close

After Sir Galahad); "nay," said he,
"but men

With strength and will to right the
wrong'd, of power

To lay the sudden heads of violence
flat,

Knights that in twelve great battles
splash'd and dyed

The strong White Horse in his own
heathen blood—

But one hath seen, and all the blind
will see.

Go, since your vows are sacred, being
made:

Yet—for ye know the cries of all my
realm

Pass thro' this hall—how often, O my
knights,

Your places being vacant at my side,
This chance of noble deeds will come

and go
Unchallenged, while ye follow wan-
dering fires

Lost in the quagmire! Many of you,
yea most,
Return no more: ye think I show
myself
Too dark a prophet: come now, let
us meet
The morrow morn once more in one
full field
Of gracious pastime, that once more
the King,
Before ye leave him for this Quest,
may count
The yet-unbroken strength of all his
knights,
Rejoicing in that Order which he
made."

' So when the sun broke next from
under ground,
All the great table of our Arthur
closed
And clash'd in such a tourney and so
full,
So many lances broken—never yet
Had Camelot seen the like, since
Arthur came;
And I myself and Galahad, for a
strength
Was in us from the vision, overthrew
So many knights that all the people
cried,
And almost burst the barriers in their
heat,
Shouting, "Sir Galahad and Sir Per-
civale!"

' But when the next day brake from
under ground—
O brother, had you known our Cam-
elot,
Built by old kings, age after age, so
old
The King himself had fears that it
would fall,
So strange, and rich, and dim; for
where the roofs
Totter'd toward each other in the sky,
Met foreheads all along the street of
those
Who watch'd us pass; and lower,
and where the long
Rich galleries, lady-laden, weigh'd the
necks

Of dragons clinging to the crazy walls,
Thicker than drops from thunder,
showers of flowers
Fell as we past; and men and boys
astride
On wyvern, lion, dragon, griffin, swan,
At all the corners, named us each by
name,
Calling "God speed!" but in the
ways below
The knights and ladies wept, and rich
and poor
Wept, and the King himself could
hardly speak
For grief, and all in middle street the
Queen,
Who rode by Lancelot, wail'd and
shriek'd aloud,
"This madness has come on us for
our sins."
So to the Gate of the three Queens
we came,
Where Arthur's wars are render'd
mystically,
And thence departed every one his
way.

' And I was lifted up in heart, and
thought
Of all my late-shown prowess in the
lists,
How my strong lance had beaten
down the knights,
So many and famous names; and
never yet
Had heaven appear'd so blue, nor
earth so green,
For all my blood danced in me, and I
knew
That I should light upon the Holy
Grail.

' Thereafter, the dark warning of
our King,
That most of us would follow wander-
ing fires,
Came like a driving gloom across my
mind.
Then every evil word I had spoken
once,
And every evil thought I had thought
of old,
And every evil deed I ever did,

Awoke and cried, "This Quest is not
for thee."
And lifting up mine eyes, I found my-
self
Alone, and in a land of sand and
thorns,
And I was thirsty even unto death;
And I, too, cried, "This Quest is not
for thee."

'And on I rode, and when I thought
my thirst
Would slay me, saw deep lawns, and
then a brook,
With one sharp rapid, where the crisp-
ing white
Play'd ever back upon the sloping
wave,
And took both ear and eye; and o'er
the brook
Were apple-trees, and apples by the
brook
Fallen, and on the lawns. "I will
rest here,"
I said, "I am not worthy of the
Quest;"
But even while I drank the brook,
and ate
The goodly apples, all these things at
once
Fell into dust, and I was left alone,
And thirsting, in a land of sand and
thorns.

'And then behold a woman at a
door
Spinning; and fair the house whereby
she sat,
And kind the woman's eyes and inno-
cent,
And all her bearing gracious; and she
rose
Opening her arms to meet me, as who
should say,
"Rest here;" but when I touch'd her,
lo! she, too,
Fell into dust and nothing, and the
house
Became no better than a broken
shed,
And in it a dead babe; and also
this
Fell into dust, and I was left alone.

'And on I rode, and greater was
my thirst.
Then flash'd a yellow gleam across
the world,
And where it smote the plowshare in
the field,
The plowman left his plowing, and
fell down
Before it; where it glitter'd on her
pail,
The milkmaid left her milking, and
fell down
Before it, and I knew not why, but
thought
"The sun is rising," tho' the sun had
risen.
Then was I ware of one that on me
moved
In golden armor with a crown of
gold
About a casque all jewels; and his
horse
In golden armor jewell'd everywhere:
And on the splendor came, flashing
me blind;
And seem'd to me the Lord of all the
world,
Being so huge. But when I thought
he meant
To crush me, moving on me, lo! he,
too,
Open'd his arms to embrace me as he
came,
And up I went and touch'd him, and
he, too,
Fell into dust, and I was left alone
And wearying in a land of sand and
thorns.

'And I rode on and found a mighty
hill,
And on the top, a city wall'd: the
spires
Prick'd with incredible pinnacles into
heaven.
And by the gateway stirr'd a crowd;
and these
Cried to me climbing, "Welcome,
Percivale!
Thou mightiest and thou purest
among men!"
And glad was I and clomb, but found
at top

No man, nor any voice. And thence
I past
Far thro' a ruinous city, and I saw
That man had once dwelt there; but
there I found
Only one man of an exceeding age.
"Where is that goodly company,"
said I,
"That so cried out upon me?" and
he had
Scarce any voice to answer, and yet
gasp'd,
"Whence and what art thou?" and
even as he spoke
Fell into dust, and disappear'd, and
I
Was left alone once more, and cried
in grief,
"Lo, if I find the Holy Grail itself
And touch it, it will crumble into
dust."

'And thence I dropt into a lowly
vale,
Low as the hill was high, and where
the vale
Was lowest, found a chapel, and
thereby
A holy hermit in a hermitage,
To whom I told my phantoms, and he
said:

"O son, thou hast not true humil-
ity,
The highest virtue, mother of them
all;
For when the Lord of all things made
Himself
Naked of glory for His mortal change,
'Take thou my robe,' she said, 'for
all is thine,'
And all her form shone forth with
sudden light
So that the angels were amazed, and
she
Follow'd Him down, and like a flying
star
Led on the gray-hair'd wisdom of the
east;
But her thou hast not known: for
what is this
Thou thoughtest of thy prowess and
thy sins?

Thou hast not lost thyself to save thy-
self
As Galahad." When the hermit
made an end,
In silver armor suddenly Galahad
shone
Before us, and against the chapel door
Laid lance, and enter'd, and we knelt
in prayer.
And there the hermit slaked my burn-
ing thirst,
And at the sacring of the mass I
saw
The holy elements alone; but he,
"Saw ye no more? I, Galahad, saw
the Grail,
The Holy Grail, descend upon the
shrine:
I saw the fiery face as of a child
That smote itself into the bread, and
went;
And hither am I come; and never yet
Hath what thy sister taught me first
to see,
This Holy Thing, fail'd from my side,
nor come
Cover'd, but moving with me night
and day,
Fainter by day, but always in the night
Blood-red, and sliding down the
blacken'd marsh
Blood-red, and on the naked moun-
tain top
Blood-red, and in the sleeping mere
below
Blood-red. And in the strength of
this I rode,
Shattering all evil customs every-
where,
And past thro' Pagan realms, and
made them mine,
And clash'd with Pagan hordes, and
bore them down,
And broke thro' all, and in the
strength of this
Come victor. But my time is hard at
hand,
And hence I go; and one will crown
me king
Far in the spiritual city; and come
thou, too,
For thou shalt see the vision when I
go."

'While thus he spake, his eye,
dwelling on mine,
Drew me, with power upon me, till I
grew
One with him, to believe as he
believed.
Then, when the day began to wane,
we went.

'There rose a hill that none but man
could climb,
Scarr'd with a hundred wintry water-
courses—
Storm at the top, and when we gain'd
it, storm
Round us and death; for every
moment glanced
His silver arms and gloom'd: so quick
and thick
The lightnings here and there to left
and right
Struck, till the dry old trunks about
us, dead,
Yea, rotten with a hundred years of
death,
Sprang into fire: and at the base we
found
On either hand, as far as eye could
see,
A great black swamp and of an evil
smell,
Part black, part whiten'd with the
bones of men,
Not to be crost, save that some
ancient king
Had built a way, where, link'd with
many a bridge,
A thousand piers ran into the great
Sea.
And Galahad fled along them bridge
by bridge,
And every bridge as quickly as he
crost
Sprang into fire and vanish'd, tho' I
yearn'd
To follow; and thrice above him all
the heavens
Open'd and blazed with thunder such
as seem'd
Shoutings of all the sons of God:
and first
At once I saw him far on the great
Sea,

In silver-shining armor starry-clear;
And o'er his head the Holy Vessel
hung
Clothed in white samite or a lumi-
nous cloud.
And with exceeding swiftness ran the
boat,
If boat it were—I saw not whence it
came.
And when the heavens open'd and
blazed again
Roaring, I saw him like a silver star—
And had he set the sail, or had the
boat
Become a living creature clad with
wings?
And o'er his head the Holy Vessel
hung
Redder than any rose, a joy to me,
For now I knew the veil had been
withdrawn.
Then in a moment when they blazed
again
Opening, I saw the least of little stars
Down on the waste, and straight
beyond the star
I saw the spiritual city and all her
spires
And gateways in a glory like one
pearl—
No larger, tho' the goal of all the
saints—
Strike from the sea; and from the
star there shot
A rose-red sparkle to the city, and there
Dwelt, and I knew it was the Holy
Grail,
Which never eyes on earth again shall
see.
Then fell the floods of heaven drown-
ing the deep.
And how my feet recrost the deathful
ridge
No memory in me lives; but that I
touch'd
The chapel-doors at dawn I know;
and thence
Taking my war-horse from the holy
man,
Glad that no phantom vexed me more,
return'd
To whence I came, the gate of
Arthur's wars.'

'O brother,' ask'd Ambrosius,—'for
in sooth
These ancient books—and they would
win thee—teem,
Only I find not there this Holy Grail,
With miracles and marvels like to
these,
Not all unlike; which oftentime I
read,
Who read but on my breviary with
ease,
Till my head swims; and then go
forth and pass
Down to the little thorpe that lies so
close,
And almost plaster'd like a martin's
nest
To these old walls—and mingle with
our folk;
And knowing every honest face of
theirs
As well as ever shepherd knew his
sheep,
And every homely secret in their
hearts,
Delight myself with gossip and old
wives,
And ills and aches, and teething,
lyings-in,
And mirthful sayings, children of the
place,
That have no meaning half a league
away:
Or lulling random squabbles when
they rise,
Chafferings and chatterings at the
market-cross,
Rejoice, small man, in this small
world of mine,
Yea, even in their hens and in their
eggs—
O brother, saving this Sir Galahad,
Came ye on none but phantoms in
your quest,
No man, no woman?'

Then Sir Percivale:
'All men, to one so bound by such a
vow,
And women were as phantoms. O,
my brother,
Why wilt thou shame me to confess
to thee

How far I falter'd from my quest and
vow?
For after I had lain so many nights,
A bedmate of the snail and eft and
snake,
In grass and burdock, I was changed
to wan
And meagre, and the vision had not
come;
And then I chanced upon a goodly
town
With one great dwelling in the mid-
dle of it;
Thither I made, and there was I dis-
arm'd
By maidens each as fair as any flower:
But when they led me into hall,
behold,
The Princess of that castle was the
one,
Brother, and that one only, who had
ever
Made my heart leap; for when I
moved of old
A slender page about her father's
hall,
And she a slender maiden, all my
heart
Went after her with longing: yet we
twain
Had never kiss'd a kiss, or vow'd a
vow.
And now I came upon her, once
again,
And one had wedded her, and he was
dead,
And all his land and wealth and state
were hers.
And while I tarried, every day she
set
A banquet richer than the day be-
fore
By me; for all her longing and her
will
Was toward me as of old; till one
fair morn,
I walking to and fro beside a stream
That flash'd across her orchard
underneath
Her castle-walls, she stole upon my
walk,
And calling me the greatest of all
knights,

Embraced me, and so kiss'd me the
first time,
And gave herself and all her wealth
to me.
Then I remember'd Arthur's warning
word,
That most of us would follow wander-
ing fires,
And the Quest faded in my heart.
Anon,
The heads of all her people drew to
me,
With supplication both of knees and
tongue :
" We have heard of thee : thou art
our greatest knight,
Our lady says it, and we well believe :
Wed thou our Lady, and rule over us,
And thou shalt be as Arthur in our
land."
O me, my brother ! but one night my
vow
Burnt me within, so that I rose and
fled,
But wail'd and wept, and hated mine
own self,
And ev'n the Holy Quest, and all but
her ;
Then after I was join'd with Galahad
Cared not for her, nor anything upon
earth.'

Then said the monk, ' Poor men,
when yule is cold,
Must be content to sit by little fires.
And this am I, so that ye care for
me
Ever so little ; yea, and blest be
Heaven
That brought thee here to this poor
house of ours
Where all the brethren are so hard,
to warm
My cold heart with a friend : but O
the pity
To find thine own first love once
more—to hold,
Hold her a wealthy bride within thine
arms,
Or all but hold, and then—cast her
aside,
Foregoing all her sweetness, like a
weed.

For we that want the warmth of
double life,
We that are plagued with dreams of
something sweet
Beyond all sweetness in a life so
rich,—
Ah, blessed Lord, I speak too earthly-
wise,
Seeing I never stray'd beyond the
cell,
But live like an old badger in his
earth,
With earth about him everywhere,
despite
All fast and penance. Saw ye none
beside,
None of your knights ?'

' Yea so,' said Percivale :
' One night my pathway swerving
east, I saw
The pelican on the casque of our Sir
Bors
All in the middle of the rising moon :
And toward him spur'd, and hail'd
him, and he me,
And each made joy of either ; then
he ask'd,
" Where is he ? hast thou seen him—
Lancelot ?—Once,"
Said good Sir Bors, " he dash'd across
me—mad,
And maddening what he rode : and
when I cried,
" Rides thou then so hotly on a
quest
So holy," Lancelot shouted, " Stay me
not !
I have been the sluggard, and I ride
apace,
For now there is a lion in the way."
So vanish'd."

' Then Sir Bors had ridden on
Softly, and sorrowing for our Lance-
lot,
Because his former madness, once the
talk
And scandal of our table, had re-
turn'd ;
For Lancelot's kith and kin so wor-
ship him
That ill to him is ill to them ; to Bors.

Beyond the rest: he well had been
content
Not to have seen, so Lancelot might
have seen,
The Holy Cup of healing; and, in-
deed,
Being so clouded with his grief and
love,
Small heart was his after the Holy
Quest:
If God would send the vision, well: if
not,
The Quest and he were in the hands
of Heaven.

'And then, with small adventure
met, Sir Bors
Rode to the lonest tract of all the
realm,
And found a people there among
their crags,
Our race and blood, a remnant that
were left
Paynim amid their circles, and the
stones
They pitch up straight to heaven: and
their wise men
Were strong in that old magic which
can trace
The wandering of the stars, and
scoff'd at him
And this high Quest as at a simple
thing:
Told him he follow'd—almost Arthur's
words—
A mocking fire: "what other fire
than he,
Whereby the blood beats, and the
blossom blows,
And the sea rolls, and all the world is
warm'd?"
And when his answer chafed them,
the rough crowd,
Hearing he had a difference with their
priests,
Seized him, and bound and plunged
him into a cell
Of great piled stones; and lying
bounden there
In darkness thro' innumerable hours
He heard the hollow-ringing heavens
sweep
Over him till by miracle—what else?—

Heavy as it was, a great stone slept
and fell,
Such as no wind could move: and
thro' the gap
Glimmer'd the streaming scud: then
came a night
Still as the day was loud; and thro'
the gap
The seven clear stars of Arthur's
Table Round—
For, brother, so one night, because
they roll
Thro' such a round in heaven, we
named the stars,
Rejoicing in ourselves and in our
King—
And these, like bright eyes of familiar
friends,
In on him shone: "And then to me,
to me,"
Said good Sir Bors, "beyond all hopes
of mine,
Who scarce had pray'd or ask'd it for
myself—
Across the seven clear stars—O grace
to me—
In color like the fingers of a hand
Before a burning taper, the sweet Grail
Glided and past, and close upon it
peal'd
A sharp quick thunder." Afterwards,
a maid,
Who kept our holy faith among her
kin
In secret, entering, loosed and let him
go.'

To whom the monk: 'And I re-
member now
That pelican on the casque: Sir Bors
it was
Who spake so low and sadly at our
board;
And mighty reverent at our grace was
he:
A square-set man and honest; and his
eyes,
An out-door sign of all the warmth
within,
Smiled with his lips—a smile beneath
a cloud,
But heaven had meant it for a sunny
one:

Ay, ay, Sir Bors, who else? But
 when ye reach'd
 The city, found ye all your knights re-
 turn'd,
 Or was there sooth in Arthur's proph-
 ecy,
 Tell me, and what said each, and what
 the King?

Then answer'd Percivale: 'And
 that can I,
 Brother, and truly; since the living
 words
 Of so great men as Lancelot and our
 King
 Pass not from door to door and out
 again,
 But sit within the house. O, when we
 reach'd
 The city, our horses stumbling as they
 trode
 On heaps of ruin, hornless unicorns,
 Crack'd basilisks, and splinter'd cocka-
 trices,
 And shatter'd talbots, which had left
 the stones
 Raw, that they fell from, brought us
 to the hall.

'And there sat Arthur on the dais-
 throne,
 And those that had gone out upon the
 Quest,
 Wasted and worn, and but a tithe of
 them,
 And those that had not, stood before
 the King,
 Who, when he saw me, rose, and bad
 me hail,
 Saying, "A welfare in thine eye re-
 proves
 Our fear of some disastrous chance for
 thee
 On hill, or plain, at sea, or flooding
 ford.
 So fierce a gale made havoc here of
 late
 Among the strange devices of our
 kings;
 Yea, shook this newer, stronger hall of
 ours,
 And from the statue Merlin moulded
 for us

Half-wrench'd a golden wing; but
 now—the Quest,
 This vision—hast thou seen the Holy
 Cup,
 That Joseph brought of old to Glas-
 tonbury?"

'So when I told him all thyself hast
 heard,
 Ambrosius, and my fresh but fixt re-
 solve
 To pass away into the quiet life,
 He answer'd not, but, sharply turning,
 ask'd
 Of Gawain, "Gawain, was this Quest
 for thee?"

"Nay, lord," said Gawain, "not
 for such as I.
 Therefore I communed with a saintly
 man,
 Who made me sure the Quest was not
 for me;
 For I was much aweared of the Quest:
 But found a silk pavilion in a field,
 And merry maidens in it; and then
 this gale
 Tore my pavilion from the tenting-pin,
 And blew my merry maidens all
 about
 With all discomfort; yea, and but for
 this,
 My twelvemonth and a day were
 pleasant to me."

'He ceased; and Arthur turn'd to
 whom at first
 He saw not, for Sir Bors, on entering,
 push'd
 Athwart the throng to Lancelot,
 caught his hand,
 Held it, and there, half-hidden by
 him, stood,
 Until the King espied him, saying to
 him,
 "Hail, Bors! if ever loyal man and
 true
 Could see it, thou hast seen the
 Grail;" and Bors,
 "Ask me not, for I may not speak of
 it:
 I saw it;" and the tears were in his
 eyes.

'Then there remain'd but Lancelot, for the rest
Spake but of sundry perils in the storm;
Perhaps, like him of Cana in Holy Writ,
Our Arthur kept his best until the last;
"Thou, too, my Lancelot," ask'd the King, "my friend,
Our mightiest, hath this Quest avail'd for thee?"

"Our mightiest!" answer'd Lancelot, with a groan;
"O King!"—and when he paused, methought I spied
A dying fire of madness in his eyes—
"O King, my friend, if friend of thine I be,
Happier are those that welter in their sin,
Swine in the mud, that cannot see for slime,
Slime of the ditch: but in me lived a sin
So strange, of such a kind, that all of pure,
Noble, and knightly in me twined and clung
Round that one sin, until the whole—some flower
And poisonous grew together, each as each,
Not to be pluck'd asunder; and when thy knights
Swore, I swore with them only in the hope
That could I touch or see the Holy Grail
They might be pluck'd asunder. Then I spake
To one most holy saint, who wept and said,
That save they could be pluck'd asunder, all
My quest were but in vain; to whom I vow'd
That I would work according as he will'd.
And forth I went, and while I yearn'd and strove
To tear the twain asunder in my heart,

My madness came upon me as of old,
And whipt me into waste fields far away;
There was I beaten down by little men,
Mean knights, to whom the moving of my sword
And shadow of my spear had been enow
To scare them from me once; and then I came
All in my folly to the naked shore,
Wide flats, where nothing but coarse grasses grew;
But such a blast, my King, began to blow,
So loud a blast along the shore and sea,
Ye could not hear the waters for the blast,
Tho' heapt in mounds and ridges all the sea
Drove like a cataract, and all the sand
Swept like a river, and the clouded heavens
Were shaken with the motion and the sound.
And blackening in the sea-foam sway'd a boat,
Half-swallow'd in it, anchor'd with a chain;
And in my madness to myself I said,
'I will embark and I will lose myself,
And in the great sea wash away my sin.'
I burst the chain, I sprang into the boat.
Seven days I drove along the dreary deep,
And with me drove the moon and all the stars;
And the wind fell, and on the seventh night
I heard the shingle grinding in the surge,
And felt the boat shock, earth, and looking up,
Behold, the enchanted towers of Carbonek,
A castle like a rock upon a rock,
With chasm-like portals open to the sea,

And steps that met the breaker!
there was none
Stood near it but a lion on each side
That kept the entry, and the moon
was full.

Then from the boat I leapt, and up
the stairs.

There drew my sword. With sud-
den-flaring manes

Those two great beasts rose upright
like a man,

Each gript a shoulder, and I stood be-
tween;

And, when I would have smitten
them, heard a voice,

'Doubt not, go forward; if thou
doubt, the beasts

Will tear thee piecemeal.' Then with
violence

The sword was dash'd from out my
hand, and fell.

And up into the sounding hall I past;
But nothing in the sounding hall I

saw,
No bench nor table, painting on the

wall
Or shield of knight; only the rounded

moon
Thro' the tall oriel on the rolling sea.

But always in the quiet house I heard,
Clear as a lark, high o'er me as a

lark,
A sweet voice singing in the topmost

tower
To the eastward: up I climb'd a

thousand steps
With pain: as in a dream I seem'd to

climb
For ever: at the last I reach'd a

door,
A light was in the crannies, and I

heard,
'Glory and joy and honor to our

Lord

And to the Holy Vessel of the Grail.'

Then in my madness I essay'd the
door;

It gave; and thro' a stormy glare, a
heat

As from a seventimes-heated furnace,
I,

Blasted and burnt, and blinded as I
was,

With such a fierceness that I swoon'd
away—

O, yet methought I saw the Holy Grail,
All pall'd in crimson samite, and

around
Great angels, awful shapes, and wings

and eyes,
And but for all my madness and my

sin,
And then my swooning, I had sworn

I saw
That which I saw; but what I saw

was veil'd
And cover'd; and this Quest was not

for me."

'So speaking, and here ceasing,
Lancelot left

The hall long silent, till Sir Gawain—
nay,

Brother, I need not tell thee foolish
words,—

A reckless and irreverent knight was
he,

Now bolden'd by the silence of his
King,—

Well, I will tell thee: "O King, my
liege," he said,

"Hath Gawain fail'd in any quest of
thine?

When have I stinted stroke in
foughten field?

But as for thine, my good friend Per-
civale,

Thy holy nun and thou have driven
men mad,

Yea, made our mightiest madder than
our least.

But by mine eyes and by mine ears I
swear,

I will be deafer than the blue-eyed
cat,

And thrice as blind as any noonday
owl,

To holy virgins in their ecstasies,
Henceforward."

"Deafer," said the blameless
King,

"Gawain, and blinder unto holy
things

Hope not to make thyself by idle
vows,

Being too blind to have desire to see.
But if indeed there came a sign from
heaven,
Blessed are Bors, Lancelot and Percivale,
For these have seen according to their
sight.

For every fiery prophet in old times,
And all the sacred madness of the
bard,
When God made music thro' them,
could but speak
His music by the framework and the
chord;
And as ye saw it ye have spoken
truth.

"Nay—but thou errest, Lancelot:
never yet
Could all of true and noble in knight
and man
Twine round one sin, whatever it
might be,
With such a closeness, but apart
there grew,
Save that he were the swine thou
spakest of,
Some root of knighthood and pure
nobleness;
Whereto see thou; that it may bear
its flower.

"And spake I not too truly, O my
knights?
Was I too dark a prophet when I
said
To those who went upon the Holy
Quest,
That most of them would follow wan-
dering fires,
Lost in the quagmire?—lost to me
and gone,
And left me gazing at a barren board,
And a lean Order—scarce return'd a
tithe—
And out of those to whom the vision
came
My greatest hardly will believe he
saw;
Another hath beheld it afar off,
And leaving human wrongs to right
themselves,
Cares but to pass into the silent life.

And one hath had the vision face to
face,
And now his chair desires him here in
vain,
However they may crown him other-
where.

"And some among you held, that
if the King
Had seen the sight he would have
sworn the vow:
Not easily, seeing that the King must
guard
That which he rules, and is but as the
hind
To whom a space of land is given to
plow.
Who may not wander from the allot-
ted field
Before his work be done; but, being
done,
Let visions of the night or of the day
Come, as they will; and many a time
they come,
Until this earth he walks on seems
not earth,
This light that strikes his eyeball is
not light,
This air that smites his forehead is
not air
But vision—yea, his very hand and
foot—
In moments when he feels he cannot
die,
And knows himself no vision to him-
self,
Nor the high God a vision, nor that
One
Who rose again: ye have seen what
ye have seen."

'So spake the King: I knew not
all he meant.'

PELLEAS AND ETTARRE.

KING ARTHUR made new knights to
fill the gap
Left by the Holy Quest; and as he sat
In hall at old Caerleon, the high
doors

Were softly sunder'd, and thro' these
 a youth,
 Pelleas, and the sweet smell of the
 fields
 Past, and the sunshine came along with
 him.

'Make me thy knight, because I
 know, Sir King,
 All that belongs to knighthood, and I
 love.'
 Such was his cry: for having heard
 the King
 Had let proclaim a tournament—the
 prize
 A golden circlet and a knightly
 sword,
 Full fain had Pelleas for his lady won
 The golden circlet, for himself the
 sword:
 And there were those who knew him
 near the King,
 And promised for him: and Arthur
 made him knight.

And this new knight, Sir Pelleas of
 the isles—
 But lately come to his inheritance,
 And lord of many a barren isle was
 he—
 Riding at noon, a day or twain before,
 Across the forest call'd of Dean, to
 find
 Caerleon and the King, had felt the
 sun
 Beat like a strong knight on his helm,
 and reel'd
 Almost to falling from his horse; but
 saw
 Near him a mound of even-sloping
 side,
 Whereon a hundred stately beeches
 grew,
 And here and there great hollies
 under them;
 But for a mile all round was open
 space,
 And fern and heath: and slowly
 Pelleas drew
 To that dim day, then binding his
 good horse
 To a tree, cast himself down; and as
 he lay

At random looking over the brown
 earth
 Thro' that green-glooming twilight of
 the grove,
 It seem'd to Pelleas that the fern
 without
 Burnt as a living fire of emeralds,
 So that his eyes were dazzled looking
 at it.
 Then o'er it crost the dimness of a
 cloud
 Floating, and once the shadow of a
 bird
 Flying, and then a fawn; and his eyes
 closed.
 And since he loved all maidens, but
 no maid
 In special, half-awake he whisper'd,
 'Where?
 O where? I love thee, tho' I know
 thee not.
 For fair thou art and pure as Guin-
 evere,
 And I will make thee with my spear
 and sword
 As famous—O my Queen, my Guin-
 evere,
 For I will be thine Arthur when we
 meet.'

Suddenly waken'd with a sound of
 talk
 And laughter at the limit of the wood,
 And glancing thro' the hoary boles,
 he saw,
 Strange as to some old prophet might
 have seem'd
 A vision hovering on a sea of fire,
 Damsels in divers colors like the
 cloud
 Of sunset and sunrise, and all of them
 On horses, and the horses richly trapt
 Breast-high in that bright line of
 bracken stood:
 And all the damsels talk'd confu-
 sedly,
 And one was pointing this way, and
 one that,
 Because the way was lost.

And Pelleas rose,
 And loosed his horse, and led him to
 the light.

There she that seem'd the chief
among them said,
'In happy time behold our pilot-star!
Youth, we are damsels-errant, and we
ride,
Arm'd as ye see, to tilt against the
knights
There at Caerleon, but have lost our
way:
To right? to left? straight forward?
back again?
Which? tell us quickly.'

Pelleas gazing thought,
'Is Guinevere herself so beautiful?'
For large her violet eyes look'd, and
her bloom
A rosy dawn kindled in stainless
heavens,
And round her limbs, mature in
womanhood;
And slender was her hand and small
her shape;
And but for those large eyes, the
haunts of scorn,
She might have seem'd a toy to trifle
with,
And pass and care no more. But
while he gazed
The beauty of her flesh abash'd the
boy,
As tho' it were the beauty of her soul:
For as the base man, judging of the
good,
Puts his own baseness in him by
default
Of will and nature, so did Pelleas lend
All the young beauty of his own soul
to hers,
Believing her; and when she spake to
him,
Stammer'd, and could not make her a
reply.
For out of the waste islands had he
come,
Where saving his own sisters he had
known
Scarce any but the women of his
isles,
Rough wives, that laugh'd and
scream'd against the gulls,
Makers of nets, and living from the
sea.

Then with a slow smile turn'd the
lady round
And look'd upon her people; and as
when
A stone is flung into some sleeping
tarn,
The circle widens till it lip the
marge,
Spread the slow smile thro' all her
company.
Three knights were thereamong; and
they too smiled,
Scorning him; for the lady was
Ettarre,
And she was a great lady in her land.

Again she said, 'O wild and of the
woods,
Knowest thou not the fashion of our
speech?
Or have the Heavens but given thee a
fair face,
Lacking a tongue?'

'O damsel,' answer'd he,
'I woke from dreams; and coming
out of gloom
Was dazzled by the sudden light,
and crave
Pardon: but will ye to Caerleon? I
Go likewise: shall I lead you to the
King?'

'Lead then,' she said; and thro'
the woods they went.
And while they rode, the meaning in
his eyes,
His tenderness of manner, and chaste
awe,
His broken utterances and bashful-
ness,
Were all a burthen to her, and in her
heart
She mutter'd, 'I have lighted on a
fool,
Raw, yet so stale!' But since her
mind was bent
On hearing, after trumpet blown, her
name
And title, 'Queen of Beauty,' in the
lists
Cried—and beholding him so strong,
she thought

That peradventure he will fight for
me,
And win the circlet : therefore flatter'd
him,
Being so gracious, that he wellnigh
deem'd
His wish by hers was echo'd ; and her
knights
And all her damsels too were gracious
to him,
For she was a great lady.

And when they reach'd
Caerleon, ere they past to lodging,
she,
Taking his hand, ' O the strong hand,'
she said,
' See ! look at mine ! but wilt thou
fight for me,
And win me this fine circlet, Pel-
leas,
That I may love thee ?'

Then his helpless heart
Leapt, and he cried, ' Ay ! wilt thou if
I win ?'
' Ay, that will I,' she answer'd, and
she laugh'd,
And straitly nipt the hand, and flung
it from her ;
Then glanced askew at those three
knights of hers,
Till all her ladies laugh'd along with
her.

' O happy world,' thought Pelleas,
' all, meseems,
Are happy ; I the happiest of them
all.'
Nor slept that night for pleasure in his
blood,
And green wood-ways, and eyes among
the leaves ;
Then being on the morrow knighted,
sware
To love one only. And as he came
away,
The men who met him rounded on
their heels
And wonder'd after him, because his
face
Shone like the countenance of a priest
of old

Against the flame about a sacrifice
Kindled by fire from heaven : so glad
was he.

Then Arthur made vast banquets,
and strange knights
From the four winds came in : and
each one sat,
Tho' served with choice from air,
land, stream, and sea,
Oft in mid-banquet measuring with his
eyes
His neighbor's make and might : and
Pelleas look'd
Noble among the noble, for he
dream'd
His lady loved him, and he knew him-
self
Loved of the King : and him his new-
made knight
Worshipt, whose lightest whisper
moved him more
Than all the ranged reasons of the
world.

Then blush'd and brake the morn-
ing of the jousts,
And this was call'd ' The Tournament
of Youth :'
For Arthur, loving his young knight,
withheld
His older and his mightier from the
lists,
That Pelleas might obtain his lady's
love,
According to her promise, and re-
main
Lord of the tourney. And Arthur had
the jousts
Down in the flat field by the shore of
Usk
Holden : the gilded parapets were
crown'd
With faces, and the great tower fill'd
with eyes
Up to the summit, and the trumpets
blew.
There all day long Sir Pelleas kept the
field
With honor : so by that strong hand
of his
The sword and golden circlet were
achieved.

Then rang the shout his lady loved :
the heat
Of pride and glory fired her face ; her
eye
Sparkled ; she caught the circlet from
his lance,
And there before the people crown'd
herself :
So for the last time she was gracious
to him.

Then at Caerleon for a space—her
look
Bright for all others, cloudier on her
knight—
Linger'd Ettarre : and seeing Pelleas
droop,
Said Guinevere, ' We marvel at thee
much,
O damsel, wearing this unsunny face
To him who won thee glory ! ' And
she said,
' Had ye not held your Lancelot in
your bower,
My Queen, he had not won.' Where-
at the Queen,
As one whose foot is bitten by an
ant,
Glanced down upon her, turn'd and
went her way.

But after, when her damsels, and
herself,
And those three knights all set their
faces home,
Sir Pelleas follow'd. She that saw
him cried,
' Damsels—and yet I should be
shamed to say it—
I cannot bide Sir Baby. Keep him
back
Among yourselves. Would rather
that we had
Some rough old knight who knew the
worldly way,
Albeit grizzlier than a bear, to ride
And jest with : take him to you, keep
him off,
And pamper him with papmeat, if ye
will,
Old milky fables of the wolf and sheep,
Such as the wholesome mothers tell
their boys.

Nay, should ye try him with a merry
one
To find his mettle, good : and if he fly
us,
Small matter ! let him.' This her
damsels heard,
And mindful of her small and cruel
hand,
They, closing round him thro' the
journey home,
Acted her hest, and always from her
side
Restrain'd him with all manner of de-
vice,
So that he could not come to speech
with her.
And when she gain'd her castle,
upsprang the bridge,
Down rang the grate of iron thro' the
groove,
And he was left alone in open field.

' These be the ways of ladies,'
Pelleas thought,
' To those who love them, trials of our
faith.
Yea, let her prove me to the utter-
most,
For loyal to the uttermost am I.'
So made his moan ; and, darkness
falling, sought
A priory not far off, there lodged, but
rose
With morning every day, and, moist or
dry,
Full-arm'd upon his charger all day
long
Sat by the walls, and no one open'd to
him.

And this persistence turn'd her
scorn to wrath.
Then calling her three knights, she
charged them, ' Out !
And drive him from the walls.' And
out they came,
But Pelleas overthrew them as they
dash'd
Against him one by one ; and these
return'd,
But still he kept his watch beneath
the wall.

Thereon her wrath became a hate;
 and once,
 A week beyond, while walking on the
 walls
 With her three knights, she pointed
 downward, 'Look,
 He haunts me—I cannot breathe—
 besieges me;
 Down! strike him! put my hate into
 your strokes,
 And drive him from my walls.' And
 down they went,
 And Pelleas overthrew them one by
 one;
 And from the tower above him cried
 Ettarre,
 'Bind him and bring him in.'

He heard her voice;
 Then let the strong hand, which had
 overthrown
 Her minion-knights, by those he over-
 threw
 Be bounden straight, and so they
 brought him in.

Then when he came before Ettarre,
 the sight
 Of her rich beauty made him at one
 glance
 More bondsman in his heart than in
 his bonds.
 Yet with good cheer he spake,
 'Behold me, Lady,
 A prisoner, and the vassal of thy will;
 And if thou keep me in thy donjon
 here,
 Content am I so that I see thy face
 But once a day: for I have sworn my
 vows,
 And thou hast given thy promise, and
 I know
 That all these pains are trials of my
 faith,
 And that thyself, when thou hast seen
 me strain'd
 And sifted to the utmost, wilt at length
 Yield me thy love and know me for
 thy knight.'

Then she began to rail so bitterly,
 With all her damsels, he was stricken
 mute;

But when she mock'd his vows and
 the great King,
 Lighted on words: 'For pity of thine
 own self,
 Peace, Lady, peace: is he not thine
 and mine?'
 'Thou fool,' she said, 'I never heard
 his voice
 But long'd to break away. Unbind
 him now,
 And thrust him out of doors; for save
 he be
 Fool to the midmost marrow of his
 bones,
 He will return no more.' And those,
 her three,
 Laugh'd, and unbound, and thrust him
 from the gate.

And after this, a week beyond,
 again
 She call'd them, saying, 'There he
 watches yet,
 There like a dog before his master's
 door!
 Kick'd, he returns: do ye not hate
 him, ye?
 Ye know yourselves: how can ye bide
 at peace,
 Affronted with his fulsome innocence?
 Are ye but creatures of the board and
 bed,
 No men to strike? Fall on him all at
 once,
 And if ye slay him I reckon not: if ye
 fail,
 Give ye the slave mine order to be
 bound,
 Bind him as heretofore, and bring
 him in:
 It may be ye shall slay him in his
 bonds.'

She spake; and at her will they
 couch'd their spears,
 Three against one: and Gawain pass-
 ing by,
 Bound upon solitary adventure, saw
 Low down beneath the shadow of those
 towers
 A villainy, three to one: and thro' his
 heart
 The fire of honor and all noble deeds

Flash'd, and he call'd, 'I strike upon
thy side—
The caitiffs!' 'Nay,' said Pelleas,
'but forbear;
He needs no aid who doth his lady's
will.'

So Gawain, looking at the villainy
done,
Forbore, but in his heat and eagerness
Trembled and quiver'd, as the dog,
withheld
A moment from the vermin that he
sees
Before him, shivers, ere he springs and
kills.

And Pelleas overthrew them, one to
three;
And they rose up, and bound, and
brought him in.
Then first her anger, leaving Pelleas,
burn'd
Full on her knights in many an evil
name
Of craven, weakling, and thrice-beaten
hound:
'Yet, take him, ye that scarce are fit
to touch,
Far less to bind, your victor, and
thrust him out,
And let who will release him from his
bonds.
And if he comes again'—there she
brake short;
And Pelleas answer'd, 'Lady, for
indeed
I loved you and I deem'd you beauti-
ful,
I cannot brook to see your beauty
marr'd
Thro' evil spite: and if ye love me
not,
I cannot bear to dream you so for-
sworn:
I had liefer ye were worthy of my
love,
Than to be loved again of you—fare-
well;
And tho' ye kill my hope, not yet my
love,
Vex not yourself: ye will not see me
more.'

While thus he spake, she gazed
upon the man
Of princely bearing, tho' in bonds,
and thought,
'Why have I push'd him from me?
this man loves,
If love there be: yet him I loved not.
Why?
I deem'd him fool? yea, so? or that
in him
A something—was it nobler than my-
self?—
Seem'd my reproach? He is not of
my kind.
He could not love me, did he know
me well.
Nay, let him go—and quickly.' And
her knights
Laugh'd not, but thrust him bounden
out of door.

Forth sprang Gawain, and loosed
him from his bonds,
And flung them o'er the walls; and
afterward,
Shaking his hands, as from a lazar's
rag,
'Faith of my body,' he said, 'and art
thou not—
Yea thou art he, whom late our Arthur
made
Knight of his table; yea and he that
won
The circlet? wherefore hast thou so
defamed
Thy brotherhood in me and all the
rest,
As let these caitiffs on thee work their
will?'

And Pelleas answer'd, 'O, their
wills are hers
For whom I won the circlet; and
mine, hers,
Thus to be bounden, so to see her face,
Marr'd tho' it be with spite and mock-
ery now,
Other than when I found her in the
woods;
And tho' she hath me bounden but in
spite,
And all to flout me, when they bring
me in,

Let me be bounden, I shall see her
face;
Else must I die thro' mine unhappi-
ness.'

And Gawain answer'd kindly tho' in
scorn,
'Why, let my lady bind me if she
will,

And let my lady beat me if she
will:

But an she send her delegate to thrall
These fighting hands of mine—Christ
kill me then

But I will slice him handless by the
wrist,

And let my lady sear the stump for
him,

Howl as he may. But hold me for
your friend:

Come, ye know nothing: here I pledge
my troth,

Yea, by the honor of the Table
Round,

I will be leal to thee and work thy
work,

And tame thy jailing princess to thine
hand.

Lend me thine horse and arms, and I
will say

That I have slain thee. She will let
me in

To hear the manner of thy fight and
fall;

Then, when I come within her
counsels, then

From prime to vespers will I chant
thy praise

As prouest knight and truest lover,
more

Than any have sung thee living, till
she long

To have thee back in lusty life again,
Not to be bound, save by white bonds

and warm,
Dearer than freedom. Wherefore

now thy horse
And armor: let me go: be com-
forted:

Give me three days to melt her fancy,
and hope

The third night hence will bring thee
news of gold.'

Then Pelleas lent his horse and all
his arms,

Saving the goodly sword, his prize,
and took

Gawain's, and said, 'Betray me not,
but help—

Art thou not he whom men call light-
of-love?'

'Ay,' said Gawain, 'for women be so
light.'

Then bounded forward to the castle
walls,

And raised a bugle hanging from his
neck,

And winded it, and that so music-
ally

That all the old echoes hidden in the
wall

Rang out like hollow woods at hunt-
ing-tide.

Up ran a score of damsels to the
tower;

'Avaunt,' they cried, 'our lady loves
thee not.'

But Gawain lifting up his vizor said,
'Gawain am I, Gawain of Arthur's

court,
And I have slain this Pelleas whom
ye hate:

Behold his horse and armor. Open
gates,

And I will make you merry.'

And down they ran,
Her damsels, crying to their lady,

'Lo!
Pelleas is dead—he told us—he that

hath
His horse and armor: will ye let him
in?

He slew him! Gawain, Gawain of
the court,

Sir Gawain—there he waits below the
wall,

Blowing his bugle as who should say
him nay.'

And so, leave given, straight on thro'
open door

Rode Gawain, whom she greeted
courteously.

'Dead, is it so?' she ask'd. 'Ay,
ay,' said he,
'And oft in dying cried upon your
name.'
'Pity on him,' she answer'd, 'a good
knight,
But never let me bide one hour at
peace.'
'Ay,' thought Gawain, 'and you be
fair enow;
But I to your dead man have given
my troth,
That whom ye loathe, him will I
make you love.'

So those three days, aimless about
the land,
Lost in a doubt, Pelleas wandering
Waited, until the third night brought
a moon
With promise of large light on woods
and ways.

Hot was the night and silent; but a
sound
Of Gawain ever coming, and this
lay—
Which Pelleas had heard sung before
the Queen,
And seen her sadden listening—vext
his heart,
And marr'd his rest—'A worm within
the rose.'

'A rose, but one, none other rose
had I,
A rose, one rose, and this was won-
drous fair,
One rose, a rose that gladden'd earth
and sky,
One rose, my rose, that sweeten'd all
mine air—
I cared not for the thorns; the thorns
were there.

'One rose, a rose to gather by and
by,
One rose, a rose, to gather and to
wear,
No rose but one—what other rose
had I?
One rose, my rose; a rose that will
not die,—

He dies who loves it,—if the worm be
there.'

This tender rhyme, and evermore the
doubt,
'Why lingers Gawain with his golden
news?'
So shook him that he could not rest,
but rode
Ere midnight to her walls, and bound
his horse
Hard by the gates. Wide open were
the gates,
And no watch kept; and in thro'
these he past,
And heard but his own steps, and his
own heart
Beating, for nothing moved but his
own self,
And his own shadow. Then he crost
the court,
And spied not any light in hall or
bower,
But saw the postern portal also wide
Yawning; and up a slope of garden,
all
Of roses white and red, and brambles
mixt
And overgrowing them, went on, and
found,
Here too, all hush'd below the mellow
moon,
Save that one rivulet from a tiny
cave
Came lightening downward, and so
spilt itself
Among the roses, and was lost again.

Then was he ware of three pavilions
rear'd
Above the bushes, gilden-peak't: in
one,
Red after revel, droned her lurdane
knights
Slumbering, and their three squires
across their feet:
In one, their malice on the placid lip
Froz'n by sweet sleep, four of her
damsels lay:
And in the third, the circlet of the
jousts
Bound on her brow, were Gawain and
Ettarre.

Back, as a hand that pushes thro'
the leaf
To find a nest and feels a snake, he
drew:
Back, as a coward slinks from what he
fears
To cope with, or a traitor proven, or
hound
Beaten, did Pelleas in an utter
shame
Creep with his shadow thro' the court
again,
Fingering at his sword-handle until
he stood
There on the castle-bridge once more,
and thought,
'I will go back, and slay them where
they lie.'

And so went back and seeing them
yet in sleep
Said, 'Ye, that so dishallow the holy
sleep,
Your sleep is death,' and drew the
sword, and thought,
'What! slay a sleeping knight? the
King hath bound
And sworn me to this brother-
hood;' again,
'Alas that ever a knight should be so
false.'
Then turn'd, and so return'd, and
groaning laid
The naked sword athwart their naked
throats,
There left it, and them sleeping; and
she lay,
The circlet of the tourney round her
brows,
And the sword of the tourney across
her throat.

And forth he past, and mounting on
his horse
Stared at her towers that, larger than
themselves
In their own darkness, throng'd into
the moon.
Then crush'd the saddle with his
thighs, and clench'd
His hands, and madden'd with him-
self and moan'd:

'Would they have risen against me
in their blood
At the last day? I might have an-
swer'd them
Even before high God. O towers so
strong,
Huge, solid, would that even while I
gaze
The crack of earthquake shivering
to your base
Split you, and Hell burst up your
harlot roofs
Bellowing, and charr'd you thro' and
thro' within,
Black as the harlot's heart—hollow
as a skull!
Let the fierce east scream thro' your
eyelet-holes,
And whirl the dust of harlots round
and round
In dung and nettles! hiss, snake—I
saw him there—
Let the fox bark, let the wolf yell.
Who yells
Here in the still sweet summer night,
but I—
I, the poor Pelleas whom she call'd
her fool?
Fool, beast—he, she, or I? myself
most fool;
Beast too, as lacking human wit—
disgraced,
Dishonor'd all for trial of true love—
Love? we be all alike: only the
King
Hath made us fools and liars. O
noble vows!
O great and sane and simple race of
brutes
That own no lust because they have
no law!
For why should I have loved her to
my shame?
I loathe her, as I loved her to my
shame.
I never loved her, I but lusted for
her—
Away—'

He dash'd the rowel into his
horse,
And bounded forth and vanish'd thro'
the night.

Then she, that felt the cold touch
on her throat,
Awaking knew the sword, and turn'd
herself
To Gawain: 'Liar, for thou hast not
slain
This Pelleas! here he stood, and might
have slain
Me and thyself.' And he that tells
the tale
Says that her ever-veering fancy
turn'd
To Pelleas, as the one true knight on
earth,
And only lover; and thro' her love
her life
Wasted and pined, desiring him in
vain.

But he by wild and way, for half
the night,
And over hard and soft, striking the
sod
From out the soft, the spark from off
the hard,
Rode till the star above the wakening
sun,
Beside that tower where Percivale
was cowl'd,
Glanced from the rosy forehead of the
dawn.
For so the words were flash'd into his
heart
He knew not whence or wherefore: 'O
sweet star,
Pure on the virgin forehead of the
dawn!'
And there he would have wept, but
felt his eyes
Harder and drier than a fountain
bed
In summer: thither came the village
girls
And linger'd talking, and they come
no more
Till the sweet heavens have fill'd it
from the heights
Again with living waters in the
change
Of seasons: hard his eyes; harder
his heart
Seem'd; but so weary were his
limbs, that he,

Gasping, 'Of Arthur's hall am I, but
here,
Here let me rest and die,' cast him-
self down,
And gulf'd his griefs in inmost sleep;
so lay,
Till shaken by a dream, that Gawain
fired
The hall of Merlin, and the morning
star
Reel'd in the smoke, brake into
flame, and fell.

He woke, and being ware of some
one nigh,
Sent hands upon him, as to tear him,
crying,
'False! and I held thee pure as
Guinevere.'

But Percivale stood near him and
replied,
'Am I but false as Guinevere is pure?
Or art thou mazed with dreams? or
being one
Of our free-spoken Table hast not
heard
That Lancelot'—there he check'd
himself and paused.

Then fared it with Sir Pelleas as
with one
Who gets a wound in battle, and the
sword
That made it plunges thro' the wound
again,
And pricks it deeper: and he shrank
and wail'd,
'Is the Queen false?' and Percivale
was mute.
'Have any of our Round Table held
their vows?'
And Percivale made answer not a
word,
'Is the King true?' 'The King!'
said Percivale.
'Why then let men couple at once
with wolves.
What! art thou mad?'

But Pelleas, leaping up,
Ran thro' the doors and vaulted on his
horse

And fled: small pity upon his horse
 had he,
 Or on himself, or any, and when he
 met
 A cripple, one that held a hand for
 alms—
 Hunch'd as he was, and like an old
 dwarf-elm
 That turns its back on the salt blast,
 the boy
 Paused not, but overrode him, shout-
 ing, 'False,
 And false with Gawain!' and so left
 him bruised
 And batter'd, and fled on, and hill
 and wood
 Went ever streaming by him till the
 gloom,
 That follows on the turning of the
 world,
 Darken'd the common path: he
 twitch'd the reins,
 And made his beast that better knew
 it, swerve
 Now off it and now on; but when he
 saw
 High up in Heaven the hall that
 Merlin built,
 Blackening against the dead-green
 stripes of even,
 'Black nest of rats,' he groan'd 'ye
 build too high.'

Not long thereafter from the city
 gates
 Issued Sir Lancelot riding airily,
 Warm with a gracious parting from
 the Queen,
 Peace at his heart, and gazing at a star
 And marvelling what it was: on whom
 the boy,
 Across the silent seeded meadow-
 grass
 Borne, clash'd: and Lancelot, saying,
 'What name hast thou
 That ridest here so blindly and so
 hard?'
 'No name, no name,' he shouted, 'a
 scourge am I
 To lash the treasons of the Table
 Round.'
 'Yea, but thy name?' 'I have many
 names,' he cried:

'I am wrath and shame and hate and
 evil fame,
 And like a poisonous wind I pass to
 blast
 And blaze the crime of Lancelot and
 the Queen.'
 'First over me,' said Lancelot, 'shalt
 thou pass.'
 'Fight therefore,' yell'd the youth,
 and either knight
 Drew back a space, and when they
 closed, at once
 The weary steed of Pelleas flounder-
 ing flung
 His rider, who call'd out from the
 dark field,
 'Thou art false as Hell: slay me: I
 have no sword.'
 Then Lancelot, 'Yea, between thy
 lips—and sharp;
 But here will I disedge it by thy
 death.'
 'Slay then,' he shriek'd, 'my will is to
 be slain,'
 And Lancelot, with his heel upon the
 fall'n,
 Rolling his eyes, a moment stood,
 then spake:
 'Rise, weakling; I am Lancelot; say
 thy say.'

And Lancelot slowly rode his war-
 horse back
 To Camelot, and Sir Pelleas in brief
 while
 Caught his unbroken limbs from the
 dark field,
 And follow'd to the city. It chanced
 that both
 Brake into hail together, worn and
 pale.
 There with her knights and dames
 was Guinevere.
 Full wonderingly she gazed on Lancelot
 lot
 So soon return'd, and then on Pelleas,
 him
 Who had not greeted her, but cast
 himself
 Down on a bench, hard-breathing.
 'Have ye fought?'
 She ask'd of Lancelot. 'Ay, my
 Queen,' he said.

'And thou hast overthrown him?'
 'Ay, my Queen.'
 Then she, turning to Pelleas, 'O
 young knight,
 Hath the great heart of knighthood
 in thee fail'd
 So far thou canst not bide, unfro-
 wardly,
 A fall from *him*?' Then, for he an-
 swer'd not,
 'Or hast thou other griefs? If I, the
 Queen,
 May help them, loose thy tongue, and
 let me know.'
 But Pelleas lifted up an eye so fierce
 She quail'd; and he, hissing 'I have
 no sword,'
 Sprang from the door into the dark.
 The Queen
 Look'd hard upon her lover, he on
 her:
 And each foresaw the dolorous day to
 be:
 And all talk died, as in a grove all
 song
 Beneath the shadow of some bird of
 prey;
 Then a long silence came upon the
 hall,
 And Modred thought, 'The time is
 hard at hand.'

THE LAST TOURNAMENT.

DAGONET, the fool, whom Gawain in
 his mood
 Had made mock-knight of Arthur's
 Table Round,
 At Camelot, high above the yellowing
 woods,
 Danced like a wither'd leaf before the
 hall.
 And toward him from the hall, with
 harp in hand,
 And from the crown thereof a carca-
 net
 Of ruby swaying to and fro, the
 prize
 Of Tristram in the jousts of yester-
 day,
 Came Tristram, saying, 'Why skip ye
 so. Sir Fool!'

For Arthur and Sir Lancelot riding
 once
 Far down beneath a winding wall of
 rock
 Heard a child wail. A stump of oak
 half-dead,
 From roots like some black coil of
 carven snakes,
 Clutch'd at the crag, and started thro'
 mid air
 Bearing an eagle's nest: and thro' the
 tree
 Rush'd ever a rainy wind, and thro'
 the wind
 Pierced ever a child's cry: and crag
 and tree
 Scaling, Sir Lancelot from the peril-
 ous nest,
 This ruby necklace thrice around her
 neck,
 And all unscarr'd from beak or talon,
 brought
 A maiden babe; which Arthur pitying
 took,
 Then gave it to his Queen to rear:
 the Queen
 But coldly acquiescing, in her white
 arms
 Received, and after loved it tenderly,
 And named it Nestling; so forgot
 herself
 A moment, and her cares; till that
 young life
 Being smitten in mid heaven with
 mortal cold
 Past from her; and in time the carca-
 net
 Vext her with plaintive memories of
 the child:
 So she, delivering it to Arthur, said,
 'Take thou the jewels of this dead in-
 nocence,
 And make them, an thou wilt, a tour-
 ney-prize.'

To whom the King, 'Peace to thine
 eagle-borne
 Dead nestling, and this honor after
 death,
 Following thy will! but, O my Queen,
 I muse
 Why ye not wear on arm, or neck, or
 zone

Those diamonds that I rescued from
the tarn,
And Lancelot won, methought, for
thee to wear.'

'Would rather you had let them
fall,' she cried,
'Plunge and be lost—ill-fated as they
were,
A bitterness to me!—ye look amazed,
Not knowing they were lost as soon
as given—
Slid from my hands, when I was lean-
ing out
Above the river—that unhappy child
Past in her barge: but rosier luck will
go
With these rich jewels, seeing that
they came
Not from the skeleton of a brother-
slayer,
But the sweet body of a maiden babe.
Perchance—who knows?—the purest
of thy knights
May win them for the purest of my
maids.'

She ended, and the cry of a great
jousts
With trumpet-blowings ran on all the
ways
From Camelot in among the faded
fields
To furthest towers; and everywhere
the knights
Arm'd for a day of glory before the
King.

But on the hither side of that loud
morn
Into the hall stagger'd, his visage
ribb'd
From ear to ear with dogwhip-weals,
his nose
Bridge-broken, one eye out, and one
hand off,
And one with shatter'd fingers dan-
gling lame,
A churl, to whom indignantly the
King,

'My churl, for whom Christ died,
what evil beast

Hath drawn his claws athwart thy
face? or fiend?
Man was it who marr'd heaven's im-
age in thee thus?'

Then, spluttering thro' the hedge of
splinter'd teeth,
Yet strangers to the tongue, and with
blunt stump
Pitch-blacken'd sawing the air, said
the maim'd churl,

'He took them and he drave them
to his tower—
Some hold he was a table-knight of
thine—
A hundred goodly ones—the Red
Knight, he—
Lord, I was tending swine, and the
Red Knight
Brake in upon me and drave them to
his tower;
And when I call'd upon thy name as
one
That doest right by gentle and by
churl,
Maim'd me and maul'd, and would
outright have slain,
Save that he sware me to a message,
saying,
"Tell thou the King and all his liars,
that I
Have founded my Round Table in the
North,
And whatsoever his own knights have
sworn
My knights have sworn the counter to
it—and say
My tower is full of harlots, like his
court,
But mine are worthier, seeing they
profess
To be none other than themselves—
and say
My knights are all adulterers like his
own,
But mine are truer, seeing they pro-
fess
To be none other; and say his hour
is come,
The heathen are upon him, his long
lance
Broken, and his Excalibur a straw."'

Then Arthur turn'd to Kay the
seneschal,
'Take thou my churl, and tend him
curiously
Like a king's heir, till all his hurts be
whole.
The heathen—but that ever-climbing
wave,
Hurl'd back again so often in empty
foam,
Hath lain for years at rest—and rene-
gades,
Thieves, bandits, leavings of confu-
sion, whom
The wholesome realm is purged of
otherwhere,
Friends, thro' your manhood and your
fidelity,—now
Make their last head like Satan in the
North.
My younger knights, new-made, in
whom your flower
Waits to be solid fruit of golden
deeds,
Move with me toward their quelling,
which achieved,
The loneliest ways are safe from
shore to shore.
But thou, Sir Lancelot, sitting in my
place
Enchain'd to-morrow, arbitrate the
field;
For wherefore shouldst thou care to
mingle with it,
Only to yield my Queen her own
again?
Speak, Lancelot, thou art silent: is it
well?'

Thereto Sir Lancelot answer'd, 'It
is well:
Yet better if the King abide, and leave
The leading of his younger knights to
me.
Else, for the King has will'd it, it is
well.'

Then Arthur rose and Lancelot fol-
low'd him,
And while they stood without the
doors, the King
Turn'd to him saying, 'Is it then so
well?'

Or mine the blame that oft I seem as
he
Of whom was written, "A sound is in
his ears"?
The foot that loiters, bidden go,—the
glance
That only seems half-loyal to com-
mand,—
A manner somewhat fall'n from rever-
ence—
Or have I dream'd the bearing of our
knights
Tells of a manhood ever less and
lower?
Or whence the fear lest this my realm,
uprear'd,
By noble deeds at one with noble
vows,
From flat confusion and brute vio-
lences,
Reel back into the beast, and be no
more?'

He spoke, and taking all his
younger knights,
Down the slope city rode, and sharply
turn'd
North by the gate. In her high
bower the Queen,
Working a tapestry, lifted up her head,
Watch'd her lord pass, and knew not
that she sigh'd.
Then ran across her memory the
strange rhyme
Of bygone Merlin, 'Where is he who
knows?
From the great deep to the great
deep he goes.'

But when the morning of a tour-
nament,
By these in earnest those in mockery
call'd
The Tournament of the Dead Inno-
cence,
Brake with a wet wind blowing, Lan-
celot,
Round whose sick head all night, like
birds of prey,
The words of Arthur flying shriek'd,
arose,
And down a streetway hung with
folds of pure

White samite, and by fountains running wine,
Where children sat in white with cups of gold,
Moved to the lists, and there, with slow sad steps
Ascending, fill'd his double-dragon'd chair.

He glanced and saw the stately galleries,
Dame, damsel, each thro' worship of their Queen
White-robed in honor of the stainless child,
And some with scatter'd jewels, like a bank
Of maiden snow mingled with sparks of fire.
He look'd but once, and vail'd his eyes again.

The sudden trumpet sounded as in a dream
To ears but half-awaked, then one low roll
Of Autumn thunder, and the jousts began:
And ever the wind blew, and yellowing leaf
And gloom and gleam, and shower and shorn plume
Went down it. Sighing weariedly, as one
Who sits and gazes on a faded fire,
When all the goodlier guests are past away,
Sat their great umpire, looking o'er the lists.
He saw the laws that ruled the tournament
Broken, but spake not; once, a knight cast down
Before his throne of arbitration cursed
The dead babe and the follies of the King;
And once the laces of a helmet crack'd,
And show'd him, like a vermin in its hole,
Modred, a narrow face: anon he heard
The voice that billow'd round the barriers roar

An ocean-sounding welcome to one knight,
But newly-enter'd, taller than the rest,
And armor'd all in forest green, whereon
There tript a hundred tiny silver deer,
And wearing but a holly-spray for crest,
With ever-scattering berries, and on shield
A spear, a harp, a bugle—Tristram—late
From overseas in Brittany return'd,
And marriage with a princess of that realm,
Isolt the White—Sir Tristram of the Woods—
Whom Lancelot knew, had held sometime with pain
His own against him, and now yearn'd to shake
The burthen off his heart in one full shock
With Tristram ev'n to death: his strong hands gript
And dinted the gilt dragons right and left,
Until he groan'd for wrath—so many of those,
That ware their ladies' colors on the casque,
Drew from before Sir Tristram to the bounds,
And there with gibes and flickering mockeries
Stood, while he mutter'd, 'Craven crests! O shame!
What faith have these in whom they swear to love?
The glory of our Round Table is no more.'

So Tristram won, and Lancelot gave, the gems,
Not speaking other word than 'Hast thou won?
Art thou the purest, brother? See, the hand
Wherewith thou takest this, is red!' to whom
Tristram, half plagued by Lancelot's languorous mood,

Made answer, 'Ay, but wherefore toss
me this
Like a dry bone cast to some hungry
hound?
Let be thy fair Queen's fantasy.
Strength of heart
And might of limb, but mainly use
and skill,
Are winners in this pastime of our
King.
My hand—belike the lance hath dript
upon it—
No blood of mine, I trow; but O
chief knight,
Right arm of Arthur in the battlefield,
Great brother, thou nor I have made
the world;
Be happy in thy fair Queen as I in
mine.'

And Tristram round the gallery
made his horse
Caracole; then bow'd his homage,
bluntly saying,
'Fair damsels, each to him who wor-
ships each
Sole Queen of Beauty and of love, be-
hold
This day my Queen of Beauty is not
here.'
And most of these were mute, some
anger'd, one
Murmuring, 'All courtesy is dead,'
and one,
'The glory of our Round Table is no
more.'

Then fell thick rain, plume droopt
and mantle clung,
And pettish cries awoke, and the wan
day
Went glooming down in wet and
weariness:
But under her black brows a swarthy
one
Laugh'd shrilly, crying, 'Praise the
patient saints,
Our one white day of Innocence hath
past,
Tho' somewhat draggled at the skirt.
So be it.
The snowdrop only, flowering thro'
the year,

Would make the world as blank as
Winter-tide.
Come—let us gladden their sad eyes,
our Queen's
And Lancelot's, at this night's so-
lemnity
With all the kindlier colors of the
field.'

So dame and damsel glitter'd at the
feast
Variously gay: for he that tells the
tale
Liken'd them, saying, as when an
hour of cold
Falls on the mountain in midsummer
snows,
And all the purple slopes of mountain
flowers
Pass under white, till the warm hour
returns
With veer of wind, and all are flow-
ers again;
So dame and damsel cast the simple
white,
And glowing in all colors, the live
grass,
Rose-campion, bluebell, kingcup,
poppy, glanced
About the revels, and with mirth so
loud
Beyond all use, that, half-amazed, the
Queen,
And wroth at Tristram and the law-
less jousts,
Brake up their sports, then slowly to
her bower
Parted, and in her bosom pain was
lord.

And little Dagonet on the morrow
morn,
High over all the yellowing Autumn-
tide,
Danced like a wither'd leaf before the
hall.
Then Tristram saying, 'Why skip ye
so, Sir Fool?'
Wheel'd round on either heel, Dag-
onet replied,
'Belike for lack of wiser company;
Or being fool, and seeing too much
wit

Makes the world rotten, why, belike I
skip

To know myself the wisest knight of
all.'

'Ay, fool,' said Tristram, 'but 'tis eat-
ing dry

To dance without a catch, a rounde-
lay

To dance to.' Then he twangled on
his harp,

And while he twangled little Dagonet
stood

Quiet as any water-sodden log
Stay'd in the wandering warble of a
brook;

But when the twangling ended, skipt
again;

And being ask'd, 'Why skipt ye not,
Sir Fool?'

Made answer, 'I had liefer twenty
years

Skip to the broken music of my
brains

Than any broken music thou canst
make.'

Then Tristram, waiting for the quip
to come,

'Good now, what music have I
broken, fool?'

And little Dagonet, skipping, 'Ar-
thur, the King's;

For when thou playest that air with
Queen Isolt,

Thou makest broken music with thy
bride,

Her daintier namesake down in Brit-
tany—

And so thou breakest Arthur's music
too.'

'Save for that broken music in thy
brains,

Sir Fool,' said Tristram, 'I would
break thy head.

Fool, I came late, the heathen wars
were o'er,

The life had flown, we sware but by
the shell—

I am but a fool to reason with a fool—
Come, thou art crabb'd and sour: but

lean me down,

Sir Dagonet, one of thy long asses'
ears,

And harken if my music be not true.

"Free love—free field—we love
but while we may:

The woods are hush'd, their music is
no more:

The leaf is dead, the yearning past
away:

New leaf, new life—the days of frost
are o'er:

New life, new love, to suit the newer
day:

New loves are sweet as those that
went before:

Free love—free field—we love but
while we may."

'Ye might have moved slow-meas-
ure to my tune,

Not stood stockstill. I made it in the
woods,

And heard it ring as true as tested
gold.'

But Dagonet with one foot poised
in his hand,

'Friend, did ye mark that fountain
yesterday

Made to run wine?—but this had run
itself

All out like a long life to a sour
end—

And them that round it sat with
golden cups

To hand the wine to whosoever
came—

The twelve small damosels white as
Innocence,

In honor of poor Innocence the
babe,

Who left the gems which Innocence
the Queen

Lent to the King, and Innocence the
King

Gave for a prize—and one of those
white slips

Handed her cup and piped, the pretty
one,

"Drink, drink, Sir Fool," and there-
upon I drank,

Spat—pish—the cup was gold, the
draught was mud.'

And Tristram, 'Was it muddier
than thy gibes?

Is all the laughter gone dead out of thee?—

Not marking how the knighthood mock thee, fool—

"Fear God: honor the King—his one true knight—

Sole follower of the vows"—for here be they

Who knew thee swine enow before I came,

Smuttier than blasted grain: but when the King

Had made thee fool, thy vanity so shot up

It frightened all free fool from out thy heart;

Which left thee less than fool, and less than swine,

A naked aught—yet swine I hold thee still,

For I have flung thee pearls and find thee swine.'

And little Dagonet mincing with his feet,

'Knight, an ye fling those rubies round my neck

In lieu of hers, I'll hold thou hast some touch

Of music, since I care not for thy pearls.

Swine? I have wallow'd, I have wash'd—the world

Is flesh and shadow—I have had my day.

The dirty nurse, Experience, in her kind

Hath foul'd me—an I wallow'd, then I wash'd—

I have had my day and my philosophies—

And thank the Lord I am King Arthur's fool.

Swine, say ye? swine, goats, asses, rams and geese

Troop'd round a Paynim harper once, who thrumm'd

On such a wire as musically as thou
Some such fine song—but never a king's fool.'

And Tristram, 'Then were swine, goats, asses, geese

The wiser fools, seeing thy Paynim bard

Had such a mastery of his mystery
That he could harp his wife up out of hell.'

Then Dagonet, turning on the ball of his foot,

'And whither harp'st thou thine? down! and thyself

Down! and two more: a helpful harper thou,

That harpest downward! Dost thou know the star

We call the harp of Arthur up in heaven?'

And Tristram, 'Ay, Sir Fool, for when our King

Was victor wellnigh day by day, the knights,

Glorying in each new glory, set his name

High on all hills, and in the signs of heaven.'

And Dagonet answer'd, 'Ay, and when the land

Was freed, and the Queen false, ye set yourself

To babble about him, all to show your wit—

And whether he were King by court-esy,

Or King by right—and so went harping down

The black king's highway, got so far, and grew

So witty that ye play'd at ducks and drakes

With Arthur's vows on the great lake of fire.

Tuwhoo! do ye see it? do ye see the star?'

'Nay, fool,' said Tristram, 'not in open day.'

And Dagonet, 'Nay, nor will: I see it and hear.

It makes a silent music up in heaven,

And I, and Arthur and the angels hear.

And then we skip.' 'Lo, fool,' he
said, 'ye talk
Fool's treason: is the King thy
brother fool?'
Then little Dagonet clapt his hands
and shrill'd,
'Ay, ay, my brother fool, the king of
fools!
Conceits himself as God that he can
make
Figs out of thistles, silk from bristles,
milk
From burning spurge, honey from
hornet-combs,
And men from beasts—Long live the
king of fools!'

And down the city Dagonet danced
away;
But thro' the slowly-mellowing
avenues
And solitary passes of the wood
Rode Tristram toward Lyonesse and
the west.
Before him fled the face of Queen
Isolt
With ruby-circled neck, but evermore
Past, as a rustle or twitter in the
wood
Made dull his inner, keen his outer
eye
For all that walk'd, or crept, or perch'd,
or flew.
Anon the face, as, when a gust hath
blown,
Unruffling waters re-collect the
shape
Of one that in them sees himself, re-
turn'd;
But at the slot or fewmets of a deer,
Or ev'n a fall'n feather, vanish'd
again.

So on for all that day from lawn to
lawn
Thro' many a league-long bower he
rode. At length
A lodge of intertwined beechen-
boughs
Furze-cramm'd, and bracken-rooft,
the which himself
Built for a summer day with Queen
Isolt

Against a shower, dark in the golden
grove
Appearing, sent his fancy back to
where
She lived a moon in that low lodge
with him:
Till Mark her lord had past, the Cor-
nish King,
With six or seven, when Tristram was
away,
And snatch'd her thence; yet dreading
worse than shame
Her warrior Tristram, spake not any
word,
But bode his hour, devising wretched-
ness.

And now that desert lodge to
Tristram lookt
So sweet, that halting, in he past, and
sank
Down on a drift of foliage random-
blown;
But could not rest for musing how to
smoothe
And sleek his marriage over to the
Queen.
Perchance in lone Tintagil far from all
The tonguesters of the court she had
not heard.
But then what folly had sent him over-
seas
After she left him lonely here? a
name?
Was it the name of one in Brittany,
Isolt, the daughter of the King?
'Isolt
Of the white hands' they call'd her:
the sweet name
Allured him first, and then the maid
herself,
Who served him well with those white
hands of hers,
And loved him well, until himself had
thought
He loved her also, wedded easily,
But left her all as easily, and return'd.
The black-blue Irish hair and Irish
eyes
Had drawn him home—what marvel?
then he laid
His brows upon the drifted leaf and
dream'd.



"THE VOICE OF THE DEAD WAS A LIVING VOICE TO ME."—*Page 106.*



He seem'd to pace the strand of
Brittany
Between Isolt of Britain and his
bride,
And show'd them both the ruby-
chain, and both
Began to struggle for it, till his Queen
Graspt it so hard, that all her hand
was red.
Then cried the Breton, 'Look, her
hand is red!
These be no rubies, this is frozen
blood,
And melts within her hand—her hand
is hot
With ill desires, but this I gave thee,
look,
Is all as cool and white as any flower.'
Follow'd a rush of eagle's wings, and
then
A whimpering of the spirit of the
child,
Because the twain had spoil'd her car-
canet.

He dream'd; but Arthur with a
hundred spears
Rode far, till o'er the illimitable reed,
And many a glancing plash and sal-
low isle,
The wide-wing'd sunset of the misty
marsh
Glared on a huge machicolated tower
That stood with open doors, whereout
was roll'd
A roar of riot, as from men secure
Amid their marshes, ruffians at their
ease
Among their harlot-brides, an evil
song,
'Lo there,' said one of Arthur's
youth, for there,
High on a grim dead tree before the
tower,
A goodly brother of the Table Round
Swung by the neck: and on the
boughs a shield
Showing a shower of blood in a field
noir,
And therebeside a horn, inflamed the
knights
At that dishonor done the gilded
spur,

Till each would clash the shield, and
blow the horn.
But Arthur waved them back. Alone
he rode.
Then at the dry harsh roar of the
great horn,
That sent the face of all the marsh
aloft
An ever upward-rushing storm and
cloud
Of shriek and plume, the Red Knight
heard, and all,
Even to tipmost lance and topmost
helm,
In blood-red armor, sallying, howl'd
to the King,

'The teeth of Hell—flay bare and
gnash thee flat!—
Lo! art thou not that eunuch-hearted
King
Who fain had clipt free manhood
from the world—
The woman-worshipper? Yea, God's
curse, and I!
Slain was the brother of my para-
mour
By a knight of thine, and I that heard
her whine
And snivel, being eunuch-hearted too,
Sware by the scorpion-worm that
twists in hell,
And stings itself to everlasting death,
To hang whatever knight of thine I
fought
And tumbled. Art thou King?—Look
to thy life!'

He ended: Arthur knew the voice;
the face
Wellnigh was helmet-hidden, and the
name
Went wandering somewhere darkling
in his mind.
And Arthur deign'd not use of word
or sword,
But let the drunkard, as he stretch'd
from horse
To strike him, overbalancing his bulk,
Down from the causeway heavily to
the swamp
Fall, as the crest of some slow-arch-
ing wave,

Heard in dead night along that table-
 shore,
 Drops flat, and after the great waters
 break
 Whitening for half a league, and thin
 themselves,
 Far over sands marbled with moon
 and cloud,
 From less and less to nothing; thus
 he fell
 Head-heavy; then the knights, who
 watch'd him, roar'd
 And shouted and leapt down upon the
 fall'n;
 There trampled out his face from be-
 ing known,
 And sank his head in mire, and
 slimed themselves:
 Nor heard the King for their own
 cries, but sprang
 Thro' open doors, and swording right
 and left
 Men, women, on their sodden faces,
 hurl'd
 The tables over and the wines, and
 slew
 Till all the rafters rang with woman-
 yells,
 And all the pavement stream'd with
 massacre;
 Then, echoing yell with yell, they
 fired the tower,
 Which half that autumn night, like
 the live North,
 Red-pulsing up thro' Alioth and
 Alcor,
 Made all above it, and a hundred
 meres
 About it, as the water Moab saw
 Come round by the East, and out be-
 yond them flush'd
 The long low dune, and lazy-plunging
 sea.

So all the ways were safe from shore
 to shore,
 But in the heart of Arthur pain was
 lord.

Then, out of Tristram waking, the
 red dream
 Fled with a shout, and that low lodge
 return'd,

Mid-forest, and the wind among the
 boughs.
 He whistled his good warhorse left to
 graze
 Among the forest greens, vaulted
 upon him,
 And rode beneath an ever-showering
 leaf,
 Till one lone woman, weeping near a
 cross,
 Stay'd him. 'Why weep ye?' 'Lord,'
 she said, 'my man
 Hath left me or is dead;' whereon he
 thought—
 'What, if she hate me now? I would
 not this.
 What, if she love me still? I would
 not that.
 I know not what I would'—but said
 to her,
 'Yet weep not thou, lest, if thy mate
 return,
 He find thy favor changed and love
 thee not'—
 Then pressing day by day thro' Lyon-
 nesse
 Last in a roky hollow, belling, heard
 The hounds of Mark, and felt the
 goodly hounds
 Yelp at his heart, but turning, past
 and gain'd
 Tintagil, half in sea, and high on land,
 A crown of towers.

Down in a casement sat,
 A low sea-sunset glorying round her
 hair
 And glossy-throated grace, Isolt the
 Queen.
 And when she heard the feet of Tris-
 tram grind
 The spiring stone that scaled about
 her tower,
 Flush'd, started, met him at the doors,
 and there
 Belted his body with her white em-
 brace,
 'Crying aloud, 'Not Mark—not Mark,
 my soul!
 The footstep flutter'd me at first: not
 he:
 Catlike thro' his own castle steals my
 Mark,

But warrior-wise thou stridest thro'
his halls
Who hates thee, as I him—ev'n to
the death.
My soul, I felt my hatred for my
Mark
Quicken within me, and knew that
thou wert nigh.
To whom Sir Tristram smiling, 'I am
here.
Let be thy Mark, seeing he is not
thine.'

And drawing somewhat backward
she replied,
'Can he be wrong'd who is not ev'n
his own,
But save for dread of thee had beaten
me,
Scratch'd, bitten, blinded, marr'd me
somehow—Mark?
What rights are his that dare not
strike for them?
Not lift a hand—not, tho' he found
me thus!
But harken! have ye met him? hence
he went
To-day for three days' hunting—as he
said—
And so returns belike within an hour.
Mark's way, my soul!—but eat not
thou with Mark,
Because he hates thee even more than
fears;
Nor drink: and when thou passest
any wood
Close vizzor, lest an arrow from the
bush
Should leave me all alone with Mark
and hell.
My God, the measure of my hate for
Mark
Is as the measure of my love for thee.'

So, pluck'd one way by hate and one
by love,
Drain'd of her force, again she sat,
and spake
To Tristram, as he knelt before her,
saying,
'O hunter, and O blower of the horn,
Harper, and thou hast been a rover
too,

For, ere I mated with my shambling
king,
Ye twain had fallen out about the
bride
Of one—his name is out of me—the
prize,
If prize she were—(what marvel—she
could see)—
Thine, friend; and ever since my
craven seeks
To wreck thee villainously: but, O Sir
Knight,
What dame or damsel have ye kneel'd
to last?'

And Tristram, 'Last to my Queen
Paramount,
Here now to my Queen Paramount of
love
And loveliness—ay, lovelier than
when first
Her light feet fell on our rough Lyon-
nesse,
Sailing from Ireland.'

Softly laugh'd Isolt;
'Flatter me not, for hath not our great
Queen
My dole of beauty trebled?' and he
said,
'Her beauty is her beauty, and thine
thine,
And thine is more to me—soft, gra-
cious, kind—
Save when thy Mark is kindled on
thy lips
Most gracious; but she, haughty, ev'n
to him,
Lancelot; for I have seen him wan
cnow
To make one doubt if ever the great
Queen
Have yielded him her love.'

To whom Isolt,
'Ah then, false hunter and false har-
per, thou
Who brakest thro' the scruple of my
bond,
Calling me thy white hind, and saying
to me
That Guinevere had sinn'd against
the highest,

And I—misynoked with such a want
of man—
That I could hardly sin against the
lowest.'

He answer'd, 'O my soul, be comforted!
If this be sweet, to sin in leading-strings,
If here be comfort, and if ours be sin,
Crown'd warrant had we for the crowning sin
That made us happy: but how ye greet me—fear
And fault and doubt—no word of that fond tale—
Thy deep heart-yearnings, thy sweet memories
Of Tristram in that year he was away.'

And, saddening on the sudden,
spake Isolt,
I had forgotten all in my strong joy
To see thee—yearnings?—ay! for,
hour by hour,
Here in the never-ended afternoon,
O sweeter than all memories of thee,
Deeper than any yearnings after thee
Seem'd those far-rolling, westward-smiling seas,
Watch'd from this tower. Isolt of
Britain dash'd
Before Isolt of Brittany on the strand,
Would that have chill'd her bride-kiss? Wedded her?
Fought in her father's battles?
wounded there?
The King was all fulfill'd with gratefulness,
And she, my namesake of the hands,
that heal'd
Thy hurt and heart with unguent and caress—
Well—can I wish her any huger wrong
Than having known thee? her too hast thou left
To pine and waste in those sweet memories.
O were I not my Mark's, by whom all men
Are noble, I should hate thee more than love.'

And Tristram, fondling her light hands, replied,
'Grace, Queen, for being loved: she loved me well.
Did I love her? the name at least I loved.
Isolt?—I fought his battles, for Isolt!
The night was dark; the true star set.
Isolt!
The name was ruler of the dark—
Isolt?
Care not for her! patient, and prayerful, meek,
Pale-blooded, she will yield herself to God.'

And Isolt answer'd, 'Yea, and why not I?
Mine is the larger need, who am not meek,
Pale-blooded, prayerful. Let me tell thee now.
Here one black, mute midsummer night I sat,
Lonely, but musing on thee, wondering where,
Murmuring a light song I had heard thee sing,
And once or twice I spake thy name aloud.
Then flash'd a levin-brand; and near me stood,
In fuming sulphur blue and green, a fiend—
Mark's way to steal behind one in the dark—
For there was Mark: "He has wedded her," he said,
Not said, but hiss'd it: then this crown of towers
So shook to such a roar of all the sky,
That here in utter dark I swoon'd away,
And woke again in utter dark, and cried,
"I will flee hence and give myself to God"—
And thou wert lying in thy new leman's arms.'

Then Tristram, ever dallying with her hand,

' May God be with thee, sweet, when
old and gray,
And past desire!' a saying that angered her.
' May God be with thee, sweet, when
thou art old,
And sweet no more to me!' I need
Him now.
For when had Lancelot utter'd aught
so gross
Ev'n to the swineherd's malkin in the
mast?
The greater man, the greater courtesy.
Far other was the Tristram, Arthur's
knight!
But thou, thro' ever harrying thy wild
beasts—
Save that to touch a harp, tilt with a
lance
Becomes thee well—art grown wild
beast thyself.
How darest thou, if lover, push me
even
In fancy from thy side, and set me far
In the gray distance, half a life away,
Her to be loved no more? Unsay it,
unswear!
Flatter me rather, seeing me so weak,
Broken with Mark and hate and soli-
tude,
Thy marriage and mine own, that I
should suck
Lies like sweet wines: lie to me: I
believe.
Will ye not lie? not swear, as there
ye kneel,
And solemnly as when ye sware to
him,
The man of men, our King—My God,
the power
Was once in vows when men believed
the King!
They lied not then, who sware, and
thro' their vows
The King prevailing made his
realm:—I say,
Swear to me thou wilt love me ev'n
when old,
Gray-hair'd, and past desire, and in
despair.'

Then Tristram, pacing moodily up
and down,

' Vows! did you keep the vow you
made to Mark
More than I mine? Lied, say ye?
Nay, but learnt,
The vow that binds too strictly snaps
itself—
My knighthood taught me this—ay,
being snapt—
We run more counter to the soul
thereof
Than had we never sworn. I swear
no more.
I swore to the great King, and am
forsworn.
For once—ev'n to the height—I hon-
or'd him.
' Man, is he man at all?' methought,
when first
I rode from our rough Lyonesse, and
beheld
That victor of the Pagan throned in
hall—
His hair, a sun that ray'd from off a
brow
Like hillsnow high in heaven, the
steel-blue eyes,
The golden beard that clothed his lips
with light—
Moreover, that weird legend of his
birth,
With Merlin's mystic babble about
his end
Amazed me; then, his foot was on a
stool
Shaped as a dragon; he seem'd to me
no man,
But Michaël trampling Satan; so I
sware,
Being amazed: but this went by—The
vows!
O ay—the wholesome madness of an
hour—
They served their use, their time; for
every knight
Believed himself a greater than him-
self,
And every follower eyed him as a God;
Till he, being lifted up beyond him-
self,
Did mightier deeds than otherwise he
had done,
And so the realm was made; but then
their vows—

First mainly thro' that sullyng of our
Queen—
Began to gall the knighthood, asking
whence
Had Arthur right to bind them to
himself?
Dropt down from heaven? wash'd up
from out the deep?
They fail'd to trace him thro' the
flesh and blood
Of our old kings: whence then? a
doubtful lord
To bind them by inviolable vows,
Which flesh and blood perforce
would violate:
For feel this arm of mine—the tide
within
Red with free chase and heather-
scented air,
Pulsing full man; can Arthur make
me pure
As any maiden child? lock up my
tongue
From uttering freely what I freely
hear?
Bind me to one? The wide world
laughs at it.
And worldling of the world am I, and
know
The ptarmigan that whitens ere his
hour
Woos his own end; we are not angels
here
Nor shall be: vows—I am woodman
of the woods,
And hear the garnet-headed yaffin-
gale
Mock them: my soul, we love but
while we may;
And therefore is my love so large for
thee,
Seeing it is not bounded save by love.'

Here ending, he moved toward her,
and she said,
'Good: an I turn'd away my love for
thee
To some one thrice as courteous as
thyself—
For courtesy wins woman all as well
As valor may, but he that closes both
Is perfect, he is Lancelot—taller
indeed,

Rosier and comelier, thou—but say I
loved
This knightliest of all knights, and
cast thee back
Thine own small saw, "We love but
while we may,"
Well then, what answer?'

He that while she spake,
Mindful of what he brought to adorn
her with,
The jewels, had let one finger lightly
touch
The warm white apple of her throat,
replied,
'Press this a little closer, sweet, until—
Come, I am hunger'd and half-anger'd
—meat,
Wine, wine—and I will love thee to
the death,
And out beyond into the dream to
come.'

So then, when both were brought
to full accord,
She rose, and set before him all he
will'd;
And after these had comforted the
blood
With meats and wines, and satiated
their hearts—
Now talking of their woodland para-
dise,
The deer, the dews, the fern, the
founts, the lawns;
Now mocking at the much ungainli-
ness,
And craven shifts, and long crane
legs of Mark—
Then Tristram laughing caught the
harp, and sang:

'Ay, ay, O ay—the winds that bend
the brier!
A star in heaven, a star within the
mere!
Ay, ay, O ay—a star was my desire,
And one was far apart, and one was
near:
Ay, ay, O ay—the winds that bow the
grass!
And one was water and one star was
fire,

And one will ever shine and one will pass.
Ay, ay, O ay—the winds that move the mere.'

Then in the light's last glimmer
Tristram show'd
And swung the ruby carcanet. She cried,
'The collar of some Order, which our King
Hath newly founded, all for thee, my soul,
For thee, to yield thee grace beyond thy peers.'

'Not so, my Queen,' he said, 'but the red fruit
Grown on a magic oak-tree in mid-heaven,
And won by Tristram as a tourney-prize,
And hither brought by Tristram for his last
Love-offering and peace-offering unto thee.'

He spoke, he turn'd, then, flinging round her neck,
Claspt it, and cried 'Thine Order, O my Queen !'
But, while he bow'd to kiss the jewell'd throat,
Out of the dark, just as the lips had touch'd,
Behind him rose a shadow and a shriek—
'Mark's way,' said Mark, and clove him thro' the brain.

That night came Arthur home, and while he climb'd,
All in a death-dumb autumn-dripping gloom,
The stairway to the hall, and look'd and saw
The great Queen's bower was dark,—about his feet
A voice clung sobbing till he question'd it,
'What art thou?' and the voice about his feet

Sent up an answer, sobbing, 'I am thy fool,
And I shall never make thee smile again.'

GUINEVERE.

QUEEN GUINEVERE had fled the court, and sat
There in the holy house at Almesbury
Weeping, none with her save a little maid,
A novice: one low light betwixt them burn'd
Blurr'd by the creeping mist, for all aboard,
Beneath a moon unseen albeit at full,
The white mist, like a face-cloth to the face,
Clung to the dead earth, and the land was still.

For hither had she fled, her cause of flight
Sir Modred; he that like a subtle beast
Lay couchant with his eyes upon the throne,
Ready to spring, waiting a chance: for this
He chill'd the popular praises of the King
With silent smiles of slow disparagement;
And tamper'd with the Lords of the White Horse,
Heathen, the brood by Hengist left; and sought
To make disruption in the Table Round
Of Arthur, and to splinter it into feuds
Serving his traitorous end; and all his aims
Were sharpen'd by strong hate for Lancelot.

For thus it chanced one morn when all the court,
Green-suited, but with plumes that mock'd the may,

Had been, their wot, a-maying and
return'd,
That Modred still in green, all ear
and eye,
Climb'd to the high top of the gar-
den-wall
To spy some secret scandal if he
might,
And saw the Queen who sat betwixt
her best
Enid, and lissome Vivien, of her
court
The wildest and the worst; and more
than this
He saw not, for Sir Lancelot passing
by
Spied where he couch'd, and as the
gardener's hand
Picks from the colewort a green cater-
pillar,
So from the high wall and the flower-
ing grove
Of grasses Lancelot pluck'd him by
the heel,
And cast him as a worm upon the
way;
But when he knew the Prince tho'
marr'd with dust,
He, reverencing king's blood in a bad
man,
Made such excuses as he might, and
these
Full knightly without scorn; for in
those days
No knight of Arthur's noblest dealt
in scorn;
But, if a man were halt or hunch'd, in
him
By those whom God had made full-
limb'd and tall,
Scorn was allow'd as part of his
defect,
And he was answer'd softly by the
King
And all his Table. So Sir Lancelot
hold
To raise the Prince, who rising twice
or thrice
Full sharply smote his knees, and
smiled, and went:
But, ever after, the small violence done
Rankled in him and ruffled all his
heart,

As the sharp wind that ruffles all day
long
A little bitter pool about a stone
On the bare coast.

But when Sir Lancelot told
This matter to the Queen, at first she
laugh'd
Lightly, to think of Modred's dusty
fall,
Then shudder'd as the village wife
who cries
'I shudder, some one steps across my
grave;'
Then laugh'd again, but faintlier, for
indeed
She half-foresaw that he, the subtle
beast,
Would track her guilt until he found,
and hers
Would be for evermore a name of
scorn.
Henceforward rarely could she front
in hall,
Or elsewhere, Modred's narrow foxy
face,
Heart-hiding smile, and gray persist-
ent eye:
Henceforward too, the Powers that
tend the soul,
To help it from the death that cannot
die,
And save it even in extremes, began
To vex and plague her. Many a time
for hours,
Beside the placid breathings of the
King,
In the dead night, grim faces came
and went
Before her, or a vague spiritual
fear—
Like to some doubtful noise of creak-
ing doors,
Heard by the watcher in a haunted
house,
That keeps the rust of murder on the
walls—
Held her awake: or if she slept she
dream'd
An awful dream; for then she seem'd
to stand
On some vast plain before a setting
sun,

And from the sun there swiftly made
 at her
 A ghastly something, and its shadow
 flew
 Before it, till it touch'd her, and she
 turn'd—
 When lo! her own, that broadening
 from her feet,
 And blackening, swallow'd all the
 land, and in it
 Far cities burnt, and with a cry she
 woke.
 And all this trouble did not pass but
 grew;
 Till ev'n the clear face of the guileless
 King,
 And trustful courtesies of household
 life,
 Became her bane; and at the last she
 said,
 'O Lancelot, get thee hence to thine
 own land,
 For if thou tarry we shall meet again,
 And if we meet again, some evil
 chance
 Will make the smouldering scandal
 break and blaze
 Before the people, and our lord the
 King.'
 And Lancelot ever promised, but re-
 main'd,
 And still they met and met. Again
 she said,
 'O Lancelot, if thou love me get thee
 hence.'
 And then they were agreed upon a
 night
 (When the good King should not be
 there) to meet
 And part for ever. Vivien, lurking,
 heard.
 She told Sir Modred. Passion-pale
 they met
 And greeted. Hands in hands, and
 eye to eye
 Low on the border of her couch they
 sat
 Stammering and staring. It was
 their last hour,
 A madness of farewells. And Mod-
 red brought
 His creatures to the basement of the
 tower

For testimony; and crying with full
 voice
 'Traitor, come out, ye are trapt at
 last,' aroused
 Lancelot, who rushing outward lion-
 like
 Leapt on him, and hurl'd him head-
 long, and he fell
 Stunn'd, and his creatures took and
 bare him off,
 And all was still: then she, 'The end
 is come,
 And I am shamed for ever;' and he
 said,
 'Mine be the shame; mine was the
 sin: but rise,
 And fly to my strong castle overseas:
 There will I hide thee, till my life shall
 end,
 There hold thee with my life against
 the world.'
 She answer'd, 'Lancelot, wilt thou
 hold me so?
 Nay, friend, for we have taken our
 farewells.
 Would God that thou couldst hide
 me from myself!
 Mine is the shame, for I was wife, and
 thou
 Unwedded: yet rise now, and let us fly,
 For I will draw me into sanctuary,
 And bide my doom.' So Lancelot
 got her horse,
 Set her thereon, and mounted on his
 own,
 And then they rode to the divided
 way,
 There kiss'd, and parted weeping: for
 he past,
 Love-loyal to the least wish of the
 Queen,
 Back to his land; but she to Almes-
 bury
 Fled all night long by glimmering
 waste and weald,
 And heard the Spirits of the waste
 and weald
 Moan as she fled, or thought she
 heard them moan:
 And in herself she moan'd 'Too late,
 too late!
 Till in the cold wind that foreruns the
 morn,

A blot in heaven, the Raven, flying
 high,
 Croak'd, and she thought, 'He spies a
 field of death;
 For now the Heathen of the Northern
 Sea,
 Lured by the crimes and frailties of
 the court,
 Begin to slay the folk, and spoil the
 land.'

And when she came to Almesbury
 she spake
 There to the nuns, and said, 'Mine
 enemies
 Pursue me, but, O peaceful Sister-
 hood,
 Receive, and yield me sanctuary, nor
 ask
 Her name to whom ye yield it, till her
 time
 To tell you:' and her beauty, grace
 and power,
 Wrought as a charm upon them, and
 they spared
 To ask it.

So the stately Queen abode
 For many a week, unknown, among
 the nuns;
 Nor with them mix'd, nor told her
 name, nor sought,
 Wrapt in her grief, for housel or for
 shrift,
 But communed only with the little
 maid,
 Who pleased her with a babbling
 heedlessness
 Which often lured her from herself;
 but now,
 This night, a rumor wildly blown about
 Came, that Sir Modred had usurp'd
 the realm,
 And leagued him with the heathen,
 while the King
 Was waging war on Lancelot: then
 she thought,
 'With what a hate the people and
 the King
 Must hate me,' and bow'd down upon
 her hands
 Silent, until the little maid, who
 brook'd

No silence, brake it, uttering 'Late!
 so late!

What hour, I wonder, now?' and
 when she drew

No answer, by and by began to hum
 An air the nuns had taught her; 'Late,
 so late!'

Which when she heard, the Queen
 look'd up, and said,

'O maiden, if indeed ye list to sing,
 Sing, and unbind my heart that I may
 weep.'

Whereat full willingly sang the little
 maid.

'Late, late, so late! and dark the
 night and chill!

Late, late, so late! but we can enter
 still.

Too late, too late! ye cannot enter
 now.

'No light had we: for that we do
 repent;

And learning this, the bridegroom
 will relent.

Too late, too late! ye cannot enter
 now.

'No light: so late! and dark and
 chill the night!

O let us in, that we may find the
 light!

Too late, too late: ye cannot enter
 now.

'Have we not heard the bridegroom
 is so sweet?

O let us in, tho' late, to kiss his feet!
 No, no, too late! ye cannot enter
 now.'

So sang the novice, while full pas-
 sionately,

Her head upon her hands, remember-
 ing

Her thought when first she came,
 wept the sad Queen.

Then said the little novice prattling
 to her,

'O pray you, noble lady, weep no
 more;

But let my words, the words of one so
 small,
 Who knowing nothing knows but to
 obey,
 And if I do not there is penance
 given—
 Comfort your sorrows; for they do
 not flow
 From evil done; right sure am I of
 that,
 Who see your tender grace and state-
 liness.
 But weigh your sorrows with our lord
 the King's,
 And weighing find them less; for
 gone is he
 To wage grim war against Sir Lance-
 lot there,
 Round that strong castle where he
 holds the Queen;
 And Modred whom he left in charge
 of all,
 The traitor—Ah sweet lady, the
 King's grief
 For his own self, and his own Queen,
 and realm,
 Must needs be thrice as great as any of
 ours.
 For me, I thank the saints, I am not
 great.
 For if there ever come a grief to me
 I cry my cry in silence, and have
 done.
 None knows it, and my tears have
 brought me good:
 But even were the griefs of little ones
 As great as those of great ones, yet
 this grief
 Is added to the griefs the great must
 bear,
 That howsoever much they may de-
 sire
 Silence, they cannot weep behind a
 cloud:
 As even here they talk at Almesbury
 About the good King and his wicked
 Queen,
 And were I such a King with such a
 Queen,
 Well might I wish to veil her wicked-
 ness,
 But were I such a King, it could not
 be.'

Then to her own sad heart mut-
 ter'd the Queen,
 'Will the child kill me with her inno-
 cent talk?'

But openly she answer'd, 'Must not I,
 If this false traitor have displaced his
 lord,
 Grieve with the common grief of all
 the realm?'

'Yea,' said the maid, 'this is all
 woman's grief,
 That *she* is woman, whose disloyal
 life
 Hath wrought confusion in the Table
 Round
 Which good King Arthur founded,
 years ago,
 With signs and miracles and wonders,
 there
 At Camelot, ere the coming of the
 Queen.'

Then thought the Queen within
 herself again,
 'Will the child kill me with her fool-
 ish prate?'
 But openly she spake and said to
 her,
 'O little maid, shut in by nunnery
 walls,
 What canst thou know of Kings and
 Tables Round,
 Or what of signs and wonders, but the
 signs
 And simple miracles of thy nunnery?'

To whom the little novice garra-
 lously,
 'Yea, but I know: the land was full of
 signs
 And wonders ere the coming of the
 Queen.
 So said my father, and himself was
 knight
 Of the great Table—at the founding of
 it;
 And rode thereto from Lyonesse, and
 he said
 That as he rode, an hour or maybe
 twain
 After the sunset, down the coast, he
 heard

Strange music, and he paused, and
 turning—there,
 All down the lonely coast of Lyon-
 nesse,
 Each with a beacon-star upon his
 head,
 And with a wild sea-light about his
 feet,
 He saw them—headland after head-
 land flame
 Far on into the rich heart of the west :
 And in the light the white mermaid
 swam,
 And strong man-breasted things stood
 from the sea,
 And sent a deep sea-voice thro' all the
 land,
 To which the little elves of chasm and
 cleft
 Made answer, sounding like a distant
 horn.
 So said my father—yea, and further-
 more,
 Next morning, while he past the dim-
 lit woods,
 Himself beheld three spirits mad with
 joy
 Come dashing down on a tall wayside
 flower,
 That shook beneath them, as the this-
 tle shakes
 When three gray linnets wrangle for
 the seed :
 And still at evenings on before his
 horse
 The flickering fairy-circle wheel'd and
 broke
 Flying, and link'd again, and wheel'd
 and broke
 Flying, for all the land was full of
 life.
 And when at last he came to Came-
 lot,
 A wreath of airy dancers hand-in-hand
 Swung round the lighted lantern of
 the hall ;
 And in the hall itself was such a feast
 As never man had dream'd ; for every
 knight
 Had whatsoever meat he long'd for
 served
 By hands unseen ; and even as he
 said

Down in the cellars merry bloated
 things
 Shoulder'd the spigot, straddling on
 the butts
 While the wine ran : so glad were
 spirits and men
 Before the coming of the sinful
 Queen.'

Then spake the Queen and some-
 what bitterly,
 'Were they so glad? ill prophets
 were they all,
 Spirits and men : could none of them
 foresee,
 Not even thy wise father with his signs
 And wonders, what has fall'n upon
 the realm?'

To whom the novice garrulously
 again,
 'Yea, one, a bard ; of whom my fa-
 ther said,
 Full many a noble war-song had he
 sung,
 Ev'n in the presence of an enemy's
 fleet,
 Between the steep cliff and the com-
 ing wave ;
 And many a mystic lay of life and
 death
 Had chanted on the smoky mountain-
 tops,
 When round him bent the spirits of
 the hills
 With all their dewy hair blown back
 like flame :
 So said my father—and that night the
 bard
 Sang Arthur's glorious wars, and sang
 the King
 As wellnigh more than man, and
 rail'd at those
 Who call'd him the false son of Gor-
 lois :
 For there was no man knew from
 whence he came ;
 But after tempest, when the long
 wave broke
 All down the thundering shores of
 Bude and Bos,
 There came a day as still as heaven,
 and then

They found a naked child upon the sands
 Of dark Tintagil by the Cornish sea;
 And that was Arthur; and they foster'd him
 Till he by miracle was approven King:
 And that his grave should be a mystery
 From all men, like his birth; and could he find
 A woman in her womanhood as great
 As he was in his manhood, then, he sang,
 The twain together well might change the world.
 But even in the middle of his song
 He falter'd, and his hand fell from the harp,
 And pale he turn'd, and reel'd, and would have fall'n,
 But that they stay'd him up; nor would he tell
 His vision; but what doubt that he foresaw
 This evil work of Lancelot and the Queen?

Then thought the Queen, 'Lo! they have set her on,
 Our simple-seeming Abbess and her nuns,
 To play upon me,' and bow'd her head nor spake.
 Whereat the novice crying, with clasp'd hands,
 Shame on her own garrulity garrulously,
 Said the good nuns would check her gadding tongue
 Full often, 'and, sweet lady, if I seem
 To vex an ear too sad to listen to me,
 Unmannerly, with prattling and the tales
 Which my good father told me, check me too
 Nor let me shame my father's memory, one
 Of noblest manners, tho' himself would say
 Sir Lancelot had the noblest; and he died,

Kill'd in a tilt, come next, five summers back,
 And left me; but of others who remain,
 And of the two first-famed for courtesy—
 And pray you check me if I ask amiss—
 But pray you, which had noblest, while you moved
 Among them, Lancelot or our lord the King?

Then the pale Queen look'd up and answer'd her,
 'Sir Lancelot, as became a noble knight,
 Was gracious to all ladies, and the same
 In open battle or the tilting-field
 Forbore his own advantage, and the King
 In open battle or the tilting-field
 Forbore his own advantage, and these two
 Were the most nobly-manner'd men of all;
 For manners are not idle, but the fruit
 Of loyal nature, and of noble mind.'

'Yea,' said the maid, 'be manners such fair fruit?
 Then Lancelot's needs must be a thousand-fold
 Less noble, being, as all rumor runs,
 The most disloyal friend in all the world.'

To which a mournful answer made the Queen:
 'O closed about by narrowing nunnery-walls,
 What knowest thou of the world, and all its lights
 And shadows, all the wealth and all the woe?
 If ever Lancelot, that most noble knight,
 Were for one hour less noble than himself,
 Pray for him that he scape the doom of fire,

And weep for her who drew him to
his doom.'

'Yea,' said the little novice, 'I pray
for both;
But I should all as soon believe that
his,
Sir Lancelot's, were as noble as the
King's,
As I could think, sweet lady, yours
would be
Such as they are, were you the sinful
Queen.'

So she, like many another babbler,
hurt
Whom she would soothe, and harm'd
where she would heal;
For here a sudden flush of wrathful
heat
Fired all the pale face of the Queen,
who cried,
'Such as thou art be never maiden
more
For ever! thou their tool, set on to
plague
And play upon, and harry me, petty
spy
And traitress.' When that storm of
anger brake
From Guinevere, aghast the maiden
rose,
White as her veil, and stood before
the Queen
As tremulously as foam upon the
beach
Stands in a wind, ready to break and
fly,
And when the Queen had added 'Get
thee hence,'
Fled frightened. Then that other left
alone
Sigh'd, and began to gather heart
again,
Saying in herself, 'The simple, fear-
ful child
Meant nothing, but my own too-fear-
ful guilt,
Simpler than any child, betrays itself.
But help me, heaven, for surely I re-
pent.
For what is true repentance but in
thought—

Not ev'n in inmost thought to think
again
The sins that made the past so pleas-
ant to us:
And I have sworn never to see him
more,
To see him more.'

And ev'n in saying this,
Her memory from old habit of the
mind
Went slipping back upon the golden
days
In which she saw him first, when
Lancelot came,
Reputed the best knight and goodliest
man,
Ambassador, to lead her to his lord
Arthur, and led her forth, and far
ahead
Of his and her retinue moving, they,
Rapt in sweet talk or lively, all on
love
And sport and tilts and pleasure, (for
the time
Was maytime, and as yet no sin was
dream'd,)
Rode under groves that look'd a pa-
radise
Of blossom, over sheets of hyacinth
That seem'd the heavens upbreking
thro' the earth,
And on from hill to hill, and every
day
Beheld at noon in some delicious dale
The silk pavilions of King Arthur
raised
For brief repast or afternoon repose
By couriers gone before; and on
again,
Till yet once more ere set of sun they
saw
The Dragon of the great Pendragon-
ship,
That crown'd the state pavilion of the
King,
Blaze by the rushing brook or silent
well.

But when the Queen immersed in
such a trance,
And moving thro' the past uncon-
sciously,

Came to that point where first she
 saw the King
 Ride toward her from the city, sigh'd
 to find
 Her journey done, glanced at him,
 thought him cold,
 High, self-contain'd, and passionless,
 not like him,
 'Not like my Lancelot'—while she
 brooded thus
 And grew half-guilty in her thoughts
 again,
 There rode an armed warrior to the
 doors.
 A murmuring whisper thro' the nun-
 nery ran,
 Then on a sudden a cry, 'The King.'
 She sat
 Stiff-stricken, listening; but when
 armed feet
 Thro' the long gallery from the outer
 doors
 Rang coming, prone from off her seat
 she fell,
 And grovel'd with her face against
 the floor:
 There with her milkwhite arms and
 shadowy hair
 She made her face a darkness from
 the King:
 And in the darkness heard his armed
 feet
 Pause by her; then came silence, then
 a voice,
 Monotonous and hollow like a Ghost's
 Denouncing judgment, but tho'
 changed, the King's:

'Liest thou here so low, the child
 of one
 I honor'd, happy, dead before thy
 shame?
 Well is it that no child is born of thee.
 The children born of thee are sword
 and fire,
 Red ruin, and the breaking up of
 laws,
 The craft of kindred and the Godless
 hosts
 Of heathen swarming o'er the North-
 ern Sea;
 Whom I, while yet Sir Lancelot, my
 right arm,

The mightiest of my knights, abode
 with me,
 Have everywhere about this land of
 Christ
 In twelve great battles ruining over-
 thrown.
 And knowest thou now from whence I
 come—from him,
 From waging bitter war with him: and
 he,
 That did not shun to smite me in
 worse way,
 Had yet that grace of courtesy in him
 left,
 He spared to lift his hand against the
 King
 Who made him knight: but many a
 knight was slain;
 And many more, and all his kith and
 kin
 Clave to him, and abode in his own
 land.
 And many more when Modred raised
 revolt,
 Forgetful of their troth and fealty,
 clave
 To Modred, and a remnant stays
 with me.
 And of this remnant will I leave a
 part,
 True men who love me still, for whom
 I live,
 To guard thee in the wild hour com-
 ing on,
 Lest but a hair of this low head be
 harm'd.
 Fear not: thou shalt be guarded till
 my death.
 Howbeit I know, if ancient prophecies
 Have err'd not, that I march to meet
 my doom.
 Thou hast not made my life so sweet
 to me,
 That I the King should greatly care
 to live;
 For thou hast spoilt the purpose of
 my life.
 Bear with me for the last time while I
 show,
 Ev'n for thy sake, the sin which thou
 hast sinn'd.
 For when the Roman left us, and
 their law

Relax'd its hold upon us, and the ways
 Were fill'd with rapine, here and there
 a deed
 Of prowess done redress'd a random
 wrong.
 But I was first of all the kings who
 drew
 The knighthood-errant of this realm
 and all
 The realms together under me, their
 Head,
 In that fair Order of my Table Round,
 A glorious company, the flower of
 men,
 To serve as model for the mighty
 world
 And be the fair beginning of a time.
 I made them lay their hands in mine
 and swear
 To reverence the King, as if he were
 Their conscience, and their conscience
 as their King,
 To break the heathen and uphold the
 Christ,
 To ride abroad redressing human
 wrongs,
 To speak no slander, no, nor listen to
 it,
 To honor his own word as if his
 God's,
 To lead sweet lives in purest chastity,
 To love one maiden only, cleave to
 her,
 And worship her by years of noble
 deeds,
 Until they won her; for indeed I knew
 Of no more subtle master under
 heaven
 Than is the maiden passion for a
 maid,
 Not only to keep down the base in
 man,
 But teach high thought, and amiable
 words
 And courtliness, and the desire of
 fame,
 And love of truth, and all that makes
 a man.
 And all this throve before I wedded
 thee,
 Believing, "lo mine helpmate, one to
 feel

My purpose and rejoicing in my joy."
 Then came thy shameful sin with
 Lancelot;
 Then came the sin of Tristram and
 Isolt;
 Then others, following these my
 mightiest knights,
 And drawing foul ensample from fair
 names,
 Sinn'd also, till the loathsome oppo-
 site
 Of all my heart had destined did ob-
 tain,
 And all thro' thee! so that this life of
 mine
 I guard as God's high gift from scathe
 and wrong,
 Not greatly care to lose; but rather
 think
 How sad it were for Arthur, should
 he live,
 To sit once more within his lonely
 hall,
 And miss the wonted number of my
 knights,
 And miss to hear high talk of noble
 deeds
 As in the golden days before thy
 sin.
 For which of us, who might be left,
 could speak
 Of the pure heart, nor seem to glance
 at thee?
 And in thy bowers of Camelot or of
 Usk
 Thy shadow still would glide from
 room to room,
 And I should evermore be vexed with
 thee
 In hanging robe or vacant ornament.
 Or ghostly footfall echoing on the
 stair.
 For think not, tho' thou wouldst not
 love thy lord,
 Thy lord hast wholly lost his love for
 thee,
 I am not made of so slight elements.
 Yet must I leave thee, woman, to thy
 shame.
 I hold that man the worst of public
 foes
 Who either for his own or children's
 sake,

To save his blood from scandal, lets
the wife
Whom he knows false, abide and rule
the house :
For being thro' his cowardice allow'd
Her station, taken everywhere for
pure,
She like a new disease, unknown to
men,
Creeps, no precaution used, among
the crowd,
Makes wicked lightnings of her eyes,
and saps
The fealty of our friends, and stirs the
pulse
With devil's leaps, and poisons half
the young.
Worst of the worst were that man he
that reigns !
Better the King's waste hearth and
aching heart
Than thou reseated in thy place of
light,
The mockery of my people, and their
bane.

He paused, and in the pause she
crept an inch
Nearer, and laid her hands about his
feet.
Far off a solitary trumpet blew.
Then waiting by the doors the war-
horse neigh'd
As at a friend's voice, and he spake
again :

'Yet think not that I come to urge
thy crimes,
I did not come to curse thee, Guine-
vere,
I, whose vast pity almost makes me die
To see thee, laying there thy golden
head,
My pride in happier summers, at my
feet.
The wrath which forced my thoughts
on that fierce law,
The doom of treason and the flaming
death,
(When first I learnt thee hidden here)
is past.
The pang—which while I weigh'd thy
heart with one

Too wholly true to dream untruth in
thee,
Made my tears burn—is also past—in
part.
And all is past, the sin is sinn'd,
and I,
Lo ! I forgive thee, as Eternal God
Forgives : do thou for thine own soul
the rest.
But how to take last leave of all I
loved ?
O golden hair, with which I used to
play
Not knowing ! O imperial-moulded
form,
And beauty such as never woman wore,
Until it came a kingdom's curse with
thee—
I cannot touch thy lips, they are not
mine,
But Lancelot's : nay, they never were
the King's.
I cannot take thy hand ; that too is
flesh,
And in the flesh thou hast sinn'd ; and
mine own flesh,
Here looking down on thine polluted,
cries
"I loathe thee : " yet not less, O
Guinevere,
For I was ever virgin save for thee,
My love thro' flesh hath wrought into
my life
So far, that my doom is, I love thee
still.
Let no man dream but that I love
thee still.
Perchance, and so thou purify thy
soul,
And so thou lean on our fair father
Christ,
Hereafter in that world where all are
pure
We two may meet before high God,
and thou
Wilt spring to me, and claim me
thine, and know
I am thine husband—not a smaller
soul,
Nor Lancelot, nor another. Leave
me that,
I charge thee, my last hope. Now
must I hence.

Thro' the thick night I hear the trumpet blow :
 They summon me their King to lead
 mine hosts
 Far down to that great battle in the west,
 Where I must strike against the man they call
 My sister's son—no kin of mine, who leagues
 With Lords of the White Horse, heathen, and knights,
 Traitors—and strike him dead, and meet myself
 Death, or I know not what mysterious doom.
 And thou remaining here wilt learn the event ;
 But hither shall I never come again,
 Never lie by thy side ; see thee no more—
 Farewell !'

And while she grovelling at his feet,
 She felt the King's breath wander o'er her neck,
 And in the darkness o'er her fallen head,
 Perceived the waving of his hands that blest.

Then, listening till those armed steps were gone,
 Rose the pale Queen, and in her anguish found
 The casement : 'peradventure,' so she thought,
 'If I might see his face, and not be seen.'
 And lo, he sat on horseback at the door !
 And near him the sad nuns with each a light
 Stood, and he gave them charge about the Queen,
 To guard and foster her for evermore.
 And while he spake to these his helm was lower'd,
 To which for crest the golden dragon clung
 Of Britain ; so she did not see the face,

Which then was as an angel's, but she saw,
 Wet with the mists and smitten by the lights,
 The Dragon of the great Pendragon-ship
 Blaze, making all the night a steam of fire.
 And even then he turn'd ; and more and more
 The moony vapor rolling round the King,
 Who seem'd the phantom of a Giant in it,
 Enwound him fold by fold, and made him gray
 And grayer, till himself became as mist
 Before her, moving ghostlike to his doom.

Then she stretch'd out her arms and cried aloud
 'Oh Arthur !' there her voice brake suddenly,
 Then—as a stream that spouting from a cliff
 Fails in mid air, but gathering at the base
 Re-makes itself, and flashes down the vale—
 Went on in passionate utterance :

'Gone—my lord !
 Gone thro' my sin to slay and to be slain !
 And he forgave me, and I could not speak.
 Farewell ! I should have answer'd his farewell.
 His mercy choked me. Gone, my lord the King,
 My own true lord ! how dare I call him mine ?
 The shadow of another cleaves to me, And makes me one pollution : he, the King,
 Call'd me polluted : shall I kill myself ?
 What help in that ? I cannot kill my sin,
 If soul be soul ; nor can I kill my shame ;

No, nor by living can I live it down.
 The days will grow to weeks, the
 weeks to months,
 The months will add themselves and
 make the years,
 The years will roll into the centuries,
 And mine will ever be a name of
 scorn.
 I must not dwell on that defeat of
 fame.
 Let the world be; that is but of
 the world;
 What else? what hope? I think
 there was a hope,
 Except he mock'd me when he spake
 of hope;
 His hope he call'd it; but he never
 mocks,
 For mockery is the fume of little
 hearts.
 And blessed be the King, who hath
 forgiven
 My wickedness to him, and left me
 hope
 That in mine own heart I can live
 down sin
 And be his mate hereafter in the
 heavens
 Before high God. Ah great and gen-
 tle lord,
 Who wast, as is the conscience of a
 saint
 Among his warring senses, to thy
 knights—
 To whom my false voluptuous pride,
 that took
 Full easily all impressions from
 below,
 Would not look up, or half-despised
 the height
 To which I would not or I could not
 climb—
 I thought I could not breathe in that
 fine air
 That pure severity of perfect light—
 I yearn'd for warmth and color which
 I found
 In Lancelot—now I see thee what
 thou art,
 Thou art the highest and most human
 too,
 Not Lancelot, nor another. Is there
 none

Will tell the King I love him tho' so
 late?
 Now—ere he goes to the great Battle?
 none:
 Myself must tell him in that purer
 life,
 But now it were too daring. Ah my
 God,
 What might I not have made of thy
 fair world,
 Had I but loved thy highest creature
 here?
 It was my duty to have loved the
 highest:
 It surely was my profit had I known:
 It would have been my pleasure had
 I seen.
 We needs must love the highest when
 we see it,
 Not Lancelot, nor another.'

Here her hand
 Grasp'd, made her veil her eyes: she
 look'd and saw
 The novice, weeping, suppliant, and
 said to her,
 'Yea, little maid, for am I not for-
 given?'
 Then glancing up beheld the holy
 nuns
 All round her, weeping; and her
 heart was loosed
 Within her, and she wept with these
 and said, -

'Ye know me then, that wicked
 one, who broke
 The vast design and purpose of the
 King.
 O shut me round with narrowing
 nunnery-walls,
 Meek maidens, from the voices cry-
 ing "shame."
 I must not scorn myself: he loves me
 still.
 Let no one dream but that he loves
 me still.
 So let me, if you do not shudder at
 me,
 Nor shun to call me sister, dwell with
 you;
 Wear black and white, and be a nun
 like you,

Fast with your fasts, not feasting with
your feasts;
Grieve with your griefs, not grieving
at your joys,
But not rejoicing; mingle with your
rites;
Pray and be pray'd for; lie before
your shrines;
Do each low office of your holy
house;
Walk your dim cloister, and distribute
dole
To poor sick people, richer in His eyes
Who ransom'd us and haler too than
I;
And treat their loathsome hurts and
heal mine own;
And so wear out in almsdeed and in
prayer
The sombre close of that voluptuous
day,

Which wrought the ruin of my lord
the King.'

She said: they took her to them-
selves; and she
Still hoping, fearing 'is it yet too
late?'
Dwelt with them, till in time their
Abbess died.
Then she, for her good deeds and her
pure life,
And for the power of ministration in
her,
And likewise for the high rank she
had borne,
Was chosen Abbess, there, an Abbess,
lived
For three brief years, and there, an
Abbess, past
To where beyond these voices there is
peace.

End of 'The Round Table.'

THE PASSING OF ARTHUR.

THAT story which the bold Sir Bedi-
vere,
First made and latest left of all the
knights,
Told, when the man was no more than
a voice
In the white winter of his age, to
those
With whom he dwelt, new faces, other
minds.

For on their march to westward,
Bedivere,
Who slowly paced among the slum-
bering host,
Heard in his tent the moanings of the
King:

'I found Him in the shining of the
stars,
I mark'd Him in the flowering of His
fields,
But in His ways with men I find Him
not.
I waged His wars, and now I pass and
die.

O me! for why is all around us here
As if some lesser god had made the
world,
But had not force to shape it as he
would,
Till the High God behold it from be-
yond,
And enter it, and make it beautiful?
Or else as if the world were wholly
fair,
But that these eyes of men are dense
and dim,
And have not power to see it as
it is:
Perchance, because we see not to the
close;—
For I, being simple, thought to work
His will,
And have but stricken with the sword
in vain;
And all whereon I lean'd in wife and
friend
Is traitor to my peace, and all my
realm
Reels back into the beast, and is no
more.

My God, thou hast forgotten me in
my death:
Nay—God my Christ—I pass but
shall not die.'

Then, ere that last weird battle in
the west,
There came on Arthur sleeping,
Gawain kill'd
In Lancelot's war, the ghost of Gawain
blown
Along a wandering wind, and past his
ear
Went shrilling, 'Hollow, hollow all
delight!
Hail, King! to-morrow thou shalt pass
away.
Farewell! there is an isle of rest for
thee.
And I am blown along a wandering
wind,
And hollow, hollow, hollow all de-
light.'
And fainter onward, like wild birds
that change
Their season in the night and wail
their way
From cloud to cloud, down the long
wind the dream
Shrill'd; but in going mingled with
dim cries
Far in the moonlit haze among the
hills,
As of some lonely city sack'd by night,
When all is lost, and wife and child
with wail
Pass to new lords; and Arthur woke
and call'd,
'Who spake? A dream. O light
upon the wind,
Thine, Gawain, was the voice—are
these dim cries
Thine? or doth all that haunts the
waste and wild
Mourn, knowing it will go along with
me?'

This heard the bold Sir Bedivere
and spake:
'O me, my King, let pass whatever
will,
Elves, and the harmless glamour of
the field;

But in their stead thy name and glory
cling
To all high places like a golden
cloud
For ever: but as yet thou shalt not
pass.
Light was Gawain in life, and light in
death
Is Gawain, for the ghost is as the
man;
And care not thou for dreams from
him, but rise—
I hear the steps of Modred in the
west,
And with him many of thy people, and
knights
Once thine, whom thou hast loved,
but grosser grown
Than heathen, spitting at their vows
and thee.
Right well in heart they know thee for
the King.
Arise, go forth and conquer as of old.'

Then spake King Arthur to Sir
Bedivere:
'Far other is this battle in the west
Whereto we move, than when we
strove in youth,
And brake the petty kings, and fought
with Rome,
Or thrust the heathen from the
Roman wall,
And shook him thro' the north. Ill
doom is mine
To war against my people and my
knights.
The king who fights his people fights
himself.
And they my knights, who loved me
once, the stroke
That strikes them dead is as my death
to me.
Yet let us hence, and find or feel a
way
Thro' this blind haze, which ever since
I saw
One lying in the dust at Almesbury,
Hath folded in the passes of the
world.'

Then rose the King and moved his
host by night,

And ever push'd Sir Modred, league
by league,
Back to the sunset bound of Lyon-
nesse—

A land of old upheaven from the
abyss

By fire, to sink into the abyss again;
Where fragments of forgotten peoples
dwelt,

And the long mountains ended in a
coast

Of ever-shifting sand, and far away
The phantom circle of a moaning sea.
There the pursuer could pursue no
more,

And he that fled no further fly the
King;

And there, that day when the great
light of heaven

Burn'd at his lowest in the rolling
year,

On the waste sand by the waste sea
they closed.

Nor ever yet had Arthur fought a
fight

Like this last, dim, weird battle of the
west.

A deathwhite mist slept over sand
and sea:

Whereof the chill, to him who
breathed it, drew

Down with his blood, till all his heart
was cold

With formless fear; and ev'n on Ar-
thur fell

Confusion, since he saw not whom he
fought.

For friend and foe were shadows in
the mist,

And friend slew friend not knowing
whom he slew;

And some had visions out of golden
youth,

And some beheld the faces of old
ghosts

Look in upon the battle; and in the
mist

Was many a noble deed, many a base,
And chance and craft and strength in
single fights,

And ever and anon with host to host
Shocks, and the splintering spear, the
hard mail hewn,

Shield-breakings, and the clash of
brands, the crash
Of battleaxes on shatter'd helms, and
shrieks

After the Christ, of those who falling
down

Look'd up for heaven, and only saw
the mist;

And shouts of heathen and the traitor
knights,

Oaths, insult, filth, and monstrous
blasphemies,

Sweat, writhings, anguish, laboring of
the lungs

In that close mist, and cryings for the
light,

Moans of the dying, and voices of the
dead.

Last, as by some one deathbed after
wail

Of suffering, silence follows, or thro'
death

Or deathlike swoon, thus over all that
shore,

Save for some whisper of the seething
seas,

A dead hush fell; but when the dolor-
ous day,

Grew drearier toward twilight falling,
came

A bitter wind, clear from the North,
and blew

The mist aside, and with that wind the
tide

Rose, and the pale King glanced
across the field

Of battle: but no man was moving
there;

Nor any cry of Christian heard
thereon,

Nor yet of heathen; only the wan
wave

Brake in among dead faces, to and
fro

Swaying the helpless hands, and up
and down

Tumbling the hollow helmets of the
fallen,

And shiver'd brands that once had
fought with Rome,

And rolling far along the gloomy
shores

The voice of days of old and days to be.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere,
And whiter than the mist that all day long
Had held the field of battle was the King:

'Hearst thou this great voice that shakes the world,
And wastes the narrow realm where-on we move,
And beats upon the faces of the dead,
My dead, as tho' they had not died for me?—
O Bedivere, for on my heart hath fall'n
Confusion, till I know not what I am,
Nor whence I am, nor whether I be King.
Behold, I seem but King among the dead.'

Then spake the bold Sir Bedivere:
'My King,
King everywhere! and so the dead have kings,
There also will I worship thee as King.
Yet still thy life is whole, and still I live
Who love thee; but who hates thee, he that brought
The heathen back among us, yonder stands,
Modred, unharm'd, the traitor of thine house.'

Then spake the King: 'My house hath been my doom.
But call not thou this traitor of my house
Who hath but dwelt beneath one roof with me.
My house are rather they who swear my vows,
Yea, even while they brake them, own'd me King.
And well for thee, saying in my dark hour,

When all the purport of my throne hath fail'd,
That quick or dead thou holdest me for King.
King am I, whatsoever be their cry;
And one last act of kinghood shalt thou see
Yet, ere I pass.' And uttering this the King
Made at the man: then Modred smote his liege
Hard on that, helm which many a heathen sword
Had beaten thin; while Arthur at one blow,
Striking the last stroke with Excalibur,
Slew him, and all but slain himself, he fell.

So all day long the noise of battle roll'd
Among the mountains by the winter sea;
Until King Arthur's Table, man by man,
Had fall'n in Lyonesse about their lord,
King Arthur. Then, because his wound was deep,
The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,
And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,
A broken chancel with a broken cross,
That stood on a dark strait of barren land:
On one side lay the Ocean, and on one
Lay a great water, and the moon was full.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
'The sequel of to-day unsolders all
The goodliest fellowship of famous knights
Whereof this world holds record.
Such a sleep
They sleep—the men I loved. I think that we
Shall never more, at any future time,
Delight our souls with talk of knightly deeds,

Walking about the gardens and the
halls
Of Camelot, as in the days that were.
I perish by this people which I
made,—

Tho' Merlin sware that I should
come again

To rule once more; but, let what will
be, be,

I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm
That without help I cannot last till
morn.

Thou therefore take my brand Excali-
bur,

Which was my pride: for thou re-
memberest how

In those old days, one summer noon,
an arm

Rose up from out the bosom of the
lake,

Clothed in white samite, mystic, won-
derful,

Holding the sword—and how I row'd
across

And took it, and have worn it, like a
king;

And, wheresoever I am sung or told
In aftertime, this also shall be known:

But now delay not: take Excalibur,
And fling him far into the middle
mere:

Watch what thou seest, and lightly
bring me word.'

To him replied the bold Sir Bedi-
vere:

'It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee
thus,

Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the
helm—

A little thing may harm a wounded
man;

Yet I thy hest will all perform at
full,

Watch what I see, and lightly bring
thee word.'

So saying, from the ruin'd shrine he
stept

And in the moon athwart the place of
tombs,

Where lay the mighty bones of an-
cient men,

Old knights, and over them the sea-
wind sang

Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He,
stepping down

By zigzag paths, and juts of pointed
rock,

Came on the shining levels of the lake.

There drew he forth the brand Ex-
calibur,

And o'er him, drawing it, the winter
moon,

Brightening the skirts of a long cloud,
ran forth

And sparkled keen with frost against
the hilt:

For all the haft twinkled with diamond
sparks,

Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-
work

Of subtlest jewellery. He gazed so
long

That both his eyes were dazzled as he
stood,

This way and that dividing the swift
mind,

In act to throw: but at the last it
seem'd

Better to leave Excalibur conceal'd

There in the many-knotted waterflags,
That whistled stiff and dry about the

marge.

So strode he back slow to the
wounded King.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir
Bedivere:

'Hast thou perform'd my mission
which I gave?

What is it thou hast seen? or what
hast heard?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedi-
vere:

'I heard the ripple washing in the
reeds,

And the wild water lapping on the
crag.'

To whom replied King Arthur,
faint and pale:

'Thou hast betray'd thy true name and
thy name,

Not rendering true answer, as be-
seem'd
Thy fealty, nor like a noble knight:
For surer sign had follow'd, either
hand,
Or voice, or else a motion of the
mere.
This is a shameful thing for men to
lie.
Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go
again,
As thou art lief and dear, and do the
thing
I bade thee, watch, and lightly bring
me word.'

Then went Sir Bedivere the second
time
Across the ridge, and paced beside
the mere,
Counting the dewy pebbles, fix'd in
thought;
But when he saw the wonder of the
hilt,
How curiously and strangely chased,
he smote
His palms together, and he cried
aloud:

'And if indeed I cast the brand
away,
Surely a precious thing, one worthy
note,
Should thus be lost forever from the
earth,
Which might have pleased the eyes of
many men.
What good should follow this, if this
were done?
What harm, undone? Deep harm to
disobey,
Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.
Were it well to obey then, if a king
demand
An act unprofitable, against himself?
The King is sick, and knows not
what he does.
What record, or what relic of my
lord
Should be to aftertime, but empty
breath
And rumors of a doubt? But were
this kept.

Stored in some treasure-house of
mighty kings,
Some one might show it at a joust of
arms,
Saying, "King Arthur's sword, Excal-
ibur,
Wrought by the lonely maiden of the
Lake.
Nine years she wrought it, sitting in
the deeps
Upon the hidden bases of the hills."
So might some old man speak in the
after-time
To all the people, winning reverence.
But now much honor and much fame
were lost.'

So spake he, clouded with his own
conceit,
And hid Excalibur the second time,
And so strode back slow to the
wounded King.

Then spoke King Arthur, breathing
heavily:
'What is it thou hast seen? or what
hast heard?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bed-
ivere:
'I heard the water lapping on the
crag,
And the long ripple washing in the
reefs.'

To whom replied King Arthur,
much in wrath:
'Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,
Unknightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is
me!
Authority forgets a dying king,
Laid widow'd of the power in his eye
That bow'd the will. I see thee what
thou art,
For thou, the latest-left of all my
knights,
In whom should meet the offices of
all,
Thou wouldst betray me for the
precious hilt;
Either from lust of gold, or like a girl
Valuing the giddy pleasure of the
eyes.

Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,
And the third time may prosper, get
thee hence:

But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,
I will arise and slay thee with my
hands.'

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere,
and ran,
And, leaping down the ridges lightly,
plunged
Among the bulrush beds, and clutch'd
the sword,
And strongly wheel'd and threw it.
The great brand
Made lightnings in the splendor of
the moon,
And flashing round and round, and
whirl'd in an arch,
Shot like a streamer of the northern
morn,
Seen where the moving isles of winter
shock
By night, with noises of the Northern
Sea.

So flash'd and fell the brand Excalibur:
But ere he dipt the surface, rose an
arm
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
And caught him by the hilt, and
brandish'd him
Three times, and drew him under in
the mere.
And lightly went the other to the
King.

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing
thicker breath:
'Now see I by thine eyes that this is
done.
Speak out: what is it thou hast heard,
or seen?'

And answer made the bold Sir
Bedivere:
'Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest
the gems
Should blind my purpose, for I never
saw,
Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I
die,

Not tho' I live three lives of mortal
men.'

So great a miracle as yonder hilt.
Then with both hands I flung him,
wheeling him;
But when I look'd again, behold an
arm,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
That caught him by the hilt, and
brandish'd him
Three times, and drew him under in
the mere.'

And answer made King Arthur,
breathing hard:
'My end draws nigh; 'tis time that I
were gone.
Make broad thy shoulders to receive
my weight,
And bear me to the margin; yet I
fear
My wound hath taken cold, and I
shall die.'

So saying, from the pavement he half
rose,
Slowly, with pain, reclining on his
arm,
And looking wistfully with wide blue
eyes
As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere
Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,
And would have spoken, but he found
not words;
Then took with care, and kneeling on
one knee,
O'er both his shoulders drew the languid hands,
And rising bore him thro' the place of
tombs.

But, as he walk'd, King Arthur
panted hard,
Like one that feels a nightmare on
his bed
When all the house is mute. So
sigh'd the King.
Muttering and murmuring at his ear,
'Quick, quick!
I fear it is too late, and I shall die.'
But the other swiftly strode from
ridge to ridge,

Clothed with his breath, and looking,
as he walk'd,
Larger than human on the frozen hills.
He heard the deep behind him, and a
cry
Before. His own thought drove him
like a goad.
Dry clash'd his harness in the icy
caves
And barren chasms, and all to left
and right
The bare black cliff clang'd round
him, as he based
His feet on juts of slippery crag that
rang
Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed
heels—
And on a sudden, lo! the level lake,
And the long glories of the winter
moon.

Then saw they how there hove a
dusky barge,
Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to
stern,
Beneath them; and descending they
were ware
That all the decks were dense with
stately forms,
Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a
dream—by these
Three Queens with crowns of gold :
and from them rose
A cry that shiver'd to the tingling
stars,
And, as it were one voice, an agony
Of lamentation, like a wind that
shrills
All night in a waste land, where no
one comes,
Or hath come, since the making of the
world.

Then murmur'd Arthur, 'Place me
in the barge.'
So to the barge they came. There
those three Queens
Put forth their hands, and took the
King, and wept.
But she, that rose the tallest of them
all
And fairest, laid his head upon her
lap,

And loosed the shatter'd casque, and
chafed his hands,
And call'd him by his name, complain-
ing loud,
And dropping bitter tears against a
brow
Striped with dark blood: for all his
face was white
And colorless, and like the wither'd
moon
Smote by the fresh beam of the
springing east;
And all his greaves and cuisses dash'd
with drops
Of onset; and the light and lustrous
curls—
That made his forehead like a rising
sun
High from the daïs-throne—were
parch'd with dust;
Or, clotted into points and hanging
loose,
Mix'd with the knightly growth that
fringed his lips.
So like a shatter'd column lay the
King;
Not like that Arthur who, with lance
in rest,
From spur to plume a star of tourna-
ment,
Shot thro' the lists at Camelot, and
charged
Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.

Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bed-
ivere :
'Ah! my Lord Arthur, whither shall
I go?
Where shall I hide my forehead and
my eyes?
For now I see the true old times are
dead,
When every morning brought a noble
chance,
And every chance brought out a noble
knight.
Such times have been not since the
light that led
The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.
But now the whole Round Table is
dissolved
Which was an image of the mighty
world,

And I, the last, go forth companion-
less,
And the days darken round me, and
the years,
Among new men, strange faces, other
minds.'

And slowly answer'd Arthur from
the barge:

✓ 'The old order changeth, yielding
place to new,
And God fulfils himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt
the world.

Comfort thyself: what comfort is in
me?

I have lived my life, and that which I
have done

May He within himself make pure!
but thou,

If thou shouldst never see my face
again,

Pray for my soul. More things are
wrought by prayer

Than this world dreams of. Where-
fore, let thy voice

Rise like a fountain for me night and
day.

For what are men better than sheep
or goats

That nourish a blind life within the
brain,

If, knowing God, they lift not hands
of prayer

Both for themselves and those who
call them friend?

For so the whole round earth is every
way

Bound by gold chains about the feet
of God. ✓

But now farewell. I am going a long
way

With these thou seest—if indeed I
go

(For all my mind is clouded with a
doubt)—

To the island-valley of Avilion;
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any

snow,
Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it

lies

Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with
orchard lawns

And bowery hollows crown'd with
summer sea,
Where I will heal me of my grievous
wound.'

So said he, and the barge with oar
and sail

Moved from the brink, like some full-
breasted swan

That, fluting a wild carol ere her
death,

Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes
the flood

With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir
Bedivere

Revolving many memories, till the
hull

Look'd one black dot against the
verge of dawn,

And on the mere the wailing died
away.

But when that moan had past for
evermore,

The stillness of the dead world's win-
ter dawn

Amazed him, and he groan'd, 'The
King is gone.'

And therewithal came on him the
weird rhyme,

'From the great deep to the great
deep he goes.'

Whereat he slowly turn'd and
slowly clomb

The last hard footstep of that iron
crag;

Thence mark'd the black hull moving
yet, and cried,

'He passes to be King among the
dead,

And after healing of his grievous
wound

He comes again; but—if he come no
more—

O me, be yon dark Queens in yon
black boat,

Who shriek'd and wail'd, the three
whereat we gazed

On that high day, when, clothed with
living light,

They stood before his throne in si-
lence, friends

Of Arthur, who should help him at his need?'

Then from the dawn it seem'd there came, but faint
As from beyond the limit of the world,
Like the last echo born of a great cry,
Sounds, as if some fair city were one voice
Around a king returning from his wars.

Thereat once more he moved about,
and clomb

Ev'n to the highest he could climb,
and saw,
Straining his eyes beneath an arch of hand,
Or thought he saw, the speck that bare the King,
Down that long water opening on the deep
Somewhere far off, pass on and on,
and go
From less to less and vanish into light.
And the new sun rose bringing the new year.

TO THE QUEEN.

O LOYAL to the royal in thyself,
And loyal to thy land, as this to thee—
Bear witness, that rememberable day,
When, pale as yet, and fever-worn,
the Prince
Who scarce had pluck'd his flickering life again
From halfway down the shadow of the grave,
Past with thee thro' thy people and their love,
And London roll'd one tide of joy thro' all
Her trebled millions, and loud leagues of man
And welcome! witness, too, the silent cry,
The prayer of many a race and creed,
and clime—
Thunderless lightnings striking under sea
From sunset and sunrise of all thy realm,
And that true North, whereof we lately heard
A strain to shame us 'keep you to yourselves;
So loyal is too costly! friends—your love
Is but a burthen: loose the bond, and go,
Is this the tone of empire? here the faith

That made us rulers? this, indeed, her voice
And meaning, whom the roar of Hougoumont
Left mightiest of all peoples under heaven?
What shock has fool'd her since, that she should speak
So feebly? wealthier—wealthier—hour by hour!
The voice of Britain, or a sinking land,
Some third-rate isle half-lost among her seas?
There rang her voice, when the full city peal'd
Thee and thy Prince! The loyal to their crown
Are loyal to their own far sons, who love
Our ocean-empire with her boundless homes
For ever-broadening England, and her throne
In our vast Orient, and one isle, one isle,
That knows not her own greatness: if she knows
And dreads it we are fall'n.—But thou, my Queen,
Not for itself, but thro' thy living love
For one to whom I made it o'er his grave
Sacred, except this old imperfect tale,

New-old, and shadowing Sense at war
 with Soul
 Rather than that gray king, whose
 name, a ghost,
 Streams like a cloud, man-shaped,
 from mountain peak,
 And cleaves to cairn and cromlech
 still; or him
 Of Geoffrey's book, or him of Mall-
 eor's, one
 Touch'd by the adulterous finger of a
 time
 That hover'd between war and wan-
 tonness,
 And crownings and dethronements:
 take withal
 Thy poet's blessing, and his trust that
 Heaven
 Will blow the tempest in the distance
 back
 From thine and ours: for some are
 scared, who mark,
 Or wisely or unwisely, signs of storm,
 Waverings of every vane with every
 wind,
 And wordy trucklings to the transient
 hour,
 And fierce or careless looseners of
 the faith,

And Softness breeding scorn of sim-
 ple life,
 Or Cowardice, the child of lust for
 gold,
 Or Labor, with a groan and not a
 voice,
 Or Art with poisonous honey stol'n
 from France,
 And that which knows, but careful for
 itself,
 And that which knows not, ruling that
 which knows
 To its own harm: the goal of this
 great world
 Lies beyond sight: yet—if our slowly-
 grown
 And crown'd Republic's crowning
 common-sense,
 That saved her many times, not fail—
 their fears
 Are morning shadows huger than the
 shapes
 That cast them, not those gloomier
 which forego
 The darkness of that battle in the
 West,
 Where all of high and holy dies
 away.

THE LOVER'S TALE.

THE original Preface to 'The Lover's Tale' states that it was composed in my nineteenth year. Two only of the three parts then written were printed, when, feeling the imperfection of the poem, I withdrew it from the press. One of my friends however who, boy-like, admired the boy's work, distributed among our common associates of that hour some copies of these two parts, without my knowledge, without the omissions and amendments which I had in contemplation, and marred by the many misprints of the compositor. Seeing that these two parts have of late been mercilessly pirated, and that what I had deemed scarce worthy to live is not allowed to die, may I not be pardoned if I suffer the whole poem at last to come into the light—accompanied with a reprint of the sequel—a work of my mature life—'The Golden Supper'?

May, 1879.

ARGUMENT.

JULIAN, whose cousin and foster-sister, Camilla, has been wedded to his friend and rival, Lionel, endeavors to narrate the story of his own love for her, and the strange sequel. He speaks (in Parts II. and III.) of having been haunted by visions and the sound of bells, tolling for a funeral, and at last ringing for a marriage; but he breaks away, overcome, as he approaches the Event, and a witness to it completes the tale.

I.

HERE far away, seen from the top-
most cliff,
Filling with purple gloom the vacan-
cies
Between the tufted hills, the sloping
seas
Hung in mid-heaven, and half-way
down rare sails,
White as white clouds, floated from
sky to sky.
Oh! pleasant breast of waters, quiet
bay,
Like to a quiet mind in the loud
world,
Where the chafed breakers of the
outer sea
Sank powerless, as anger falls aside
And withers on the breast of peaceful
love;
Thou didst receive the growth of
pines that fledged
The hills that watch'd thee, as Love
watcheth Love,
In thine own essence, and delight thy-
self
To make it wholly thine on sunny
days.

Keep thou thy name of 'Lover's
Bay.' See, sirs,
Even now the Goddess of the Past,
that takes
The heart, and sometimes touches but
one string
That quivers, and is silent, and some-
times
Sweeps suddenly all its half-moulder'd
chords
To some old melody, begins to
play
That air which pleased her first. I
feel thy breath;
I come, great Mistress of the ear and
eye:
Thy breath is of the pinewood; and
tho' years
Have hollow'd out a deep and stormy
strait
Betwixt the native land of Love and
me,
Breathe but a little on me, and the
sail
Will draw me to the rising of the
sun,
The lucid chambers of the morning
star,
And East of Life.

Permit me, friend, I prythee,
 To pass my hand across my brows,
 and muse
 On those dear hills, that never more
 will meet
 The sight that throbs and aches be-
 neath my touch,
 As tho' there beat a heart in either
 eye;
 For when the outer lights are darken'd
 thus,
 The memory's vision hath a keener
 edge.
 It grows upon me now—the semicircle
 Of dark-blue waters and the narrow
 fringe
 Of curving beach—its wreaths of
 dripping green—
 Its pale pink shells—the summerhouse
 aloft
 That open'd on the pines with doors
 of glass,
 A mountain nest—the pleasure-boat
 that rock'd,
 Light-green with its own shadow, keel
 to keel,
 Upon the dappled dimplings of the
 wave,
 That blanch'd upon its side.

O Love, O Hope!
 They come, they crowd upon me all
 at once—
 Moved from the cloud of unforgotten
 things,
 That sometimes on the horizon of the
 mind
 Lies folded, often sweeps athwart in
 storm—
 Flash upon flash they lighten thro'
 me—days
 Of dewy dawning and the amber
 eyes
 When thou and I, Camilla, thou and
 I
 Were borne about the bay or safely
 moor'd
 Beneath a low-brow'd cavern, where
 the tide
 Plash'd, sapping its worn ribs; and all
 without
 The slowly-riding rollers on the
 cliffs

Clash'd, calling to each other, and
 thro' the arch
 Down those loud waters, like a set-
 ting star,
 Mixt with the gorgeous west the
 lighthouse shone,
 And silver-smiling Venus ere she fell
 Would often loiter in her balmy blue,
 To crown it with herself.

Here, too, my love
 Waver'd at anchor with me, when
 day hung
 From his mid-dome in Heaven's airy
 halls;
 Gleams of the water-circles as they
 broke,
 Flicker'd like doubtful smiles about
 her lips,
 Quiver'd a flying glory on her hair,
 Leapt like a passing thought across
 her eyes;
 And mine with one that will not pass,
 till earth
 And heaven pass too, dwelt on my
 heaven, a face
 Most starry-fair, but kindled from
 within
 As 'twere with dawn. She was dark
 hair'd, dark-eyed:
 Oh, such dark eyes! a single glance
 of them
 Will govern a whole life from birth
 to death,
 Careless of all things else, led on with
 light
 In trances and in visions: look at
 them,
 You lose yourself in utter ignorance;
 You cannot find their depth; for they
 go back,
 And farther back, and still withdraw
 themselves
 Quite into the deep soul, that ever-
 more
 Fresh springing from her fountains in
 the brain,
 Still pouring thro', floods with re-
 dundant life
 Her narrow portals.

Trust me, long ago
 I should have died, if it were possible

To die in gazing on that perfectness
Which I do bear within me: I had
died,
But from my farthest lapse, my latest
ebb,
Thine image, like a charm of light
and strength
Upon the waters, push'd me back
again
On these deserted sands of barren
life.
Tho' from the deep vault where the
heart of Hope
Fell into dust, and crumbled in the
dark—
Forgetting how to render beautiful
Her countenance with quick and
healthful blood—
Thou didst not sway me upward;
could I perish
While thou, a meteor of the sepul-
chre,
Didst swathe thyself all round Hope's
quiet urn
For ever? He, that saith it, hath
o'er-stept
The slippery footing of his narrow
wit,
And fall'n away from judgment.
Thou art light,
To which my spirit leaneth all her
flowers,
And length of days, and immortal-
ity
Of thought, and freshness ever self-
renew'd.
For Time and Grief abode too long
with Life,
And, like all other friends i' the
world, at last
They grew weary of her fellowship:
So Time and Grief did beckon unto
Death,
And Death drew nigh and beat the
doors of Life;
But thou didst sit alone in the inner
house,
A wakeful portress, and didst parle
with Death,
'This is a charmed dwelling which I
hold;'
So Death gave back, and would no
further come.

Vet is my life nor in the present
time,
Nor in the present place. To me
alone,
Push'd from his chair of regal herit-
age.
The Present is the vassal of the
Past:
So that, in that I *have* lived, do I
live,
And cannot die, and am, in having
been—
A portion of the pleasant yesterday,
Thrust forward on to-day and out of
place;
A body journeying onward, sick with
toil,
The weight as if of age upon my
limbs,
The grasp of hopeless grief about my
heart,
And all the senses weaken'd, save in
that,
Which long ago they had glean'd
and garner'd up
Into the granaries of memory—
The clear brow, bulwark of the pre-
cious brain,
Chink'd as you see, and scam'd—and
all the while
The light soul twines and mingles
with the growths
Of vigorous early days, attracted,
won,
Married, made one with, molten into
all
The beautiful in Past of act or
place,
And like the all-enduring camel,
driven
Far from the diamond fountain by
the palms,
Who toils across the middle moonlit
nights,
Or when the white heats of the blind-
ing noons
Beat from the concave sand; yet in
him keeps
A draught of that sweet fountain
that he loves,
To stay his feet from falling, and his
spirit
From bitterness of death.

Ye ask me, friends,
 When I began to love. How should
 I tell you?
 Or from the after-fulness of my heart,
 Flow back again unto my slender
 spring
 And first of love, tho' every turn and
 depth
 Between is clearer in my life than
 all
 Its present flow. Ye know not what
 ye ask.
 How should the broad and open
 flower tell
 What sort of bud it was, when, prest
 together
 In its green sheath, close-lapt in
 silken folds,
 It seem'd to keep its sweetness to it-
 self,
 Yet was not the less sweet for that it
 seem'd?
 For young Life knows not when
 young Life was born,
 But takes it all for granted: neither
 Love,
 Warm in the heart, his cradle, can re-
 member
 Love in the womb, but resteth satis-
 fied,
 Looking on her that brought him to
 the light:
 Or as men know not when they fall
 asleep
 Into delicious dreams, our other life,
 So know I not when I began to love.
 This is my sum of knowledge—that
 my love
 Grew with myself—say rather, was
 my growth,
 My inward sap, the hold I have on
 earth,
 My outward circling air wherewith I
 breathe,
 Which yet upholds my life, and ever-
 more
 Is to me daily life and daily death:
 For how should I have lived and not
 have loved?
 Can ye take off the sweetness from
 the flower,
 The color and the sweetness from the
 rose,

And place them by themselves; or
 set apart
 Their motions and their brightness
 from the stars,
 And then point out the flower or the
 star?
 Or build a wall betwixt my life and
 love,
 And tell me where I am? 'Tis even
 thus:
 In that I live I love; because I love
 I live: whate'er is fountain to the one
 Is fountain to the other; and when-
 e'er
 Our God unknits the riddle of the
 one,
 There is no shade or fold of mystery
 Swathing the other.

Many, many years,
 (For they seem many and my most of
 life,
 And well I could have linger'd in
 that porch,
 So unproportion'd to the dwelling-
 place,)
 In the Maydews of childhood, oppo-
 site
 The flush and dawn of youth, we
 lived together,
 Apart, alone together on those hills.

Before he saw my day my father
 died,
 And he was happy that he saw it not;
 But I and the first daisy on his grave
 From the same clay came into light at
 once.
 As Love and I do number equal
 years,
 So she, my love, is of an age with me.
 How like each other was the birth of
 each!
 On the same morning, almost the
 same hour,
 Under the selfsame aspect of the
 stars,
 (Oh falsehood of all starcraft!) we
 were born.
 How like each other was the birth of
 each!
 The sister of my mother—she that
 bore

Camilla close beneath her beating
heart,
Which to the imprison'd spirit of the
child,
With its true-touched pulses in the
flow
And hourly visitation of the blood,
Sent notes of preparation manifold,
And mellow'd echoes of the outer
world—
My mother's sister, mother of my
love,
Who had a twofold claim upon my
heart,
One twofold mightier than the other
was,
In giving so much beauty to the
world,
And so much wealth as God had
charged her with—
Loathing to put it from herself for
ever,
Left her own life with it; and dying
thus,
Crown'd with her highest act the
placid face
And breathless body of her good
deeds past.

So were we born, so orphan'd.
She was motherless
And I without a father. So from
each
Of those two pillars which from earth
uphold
Our childhood, one had fallen away,
and all
The careful burthen of our tender
years
Trembled upon the other. He that
gave
Her life, to me delightedly fulfill'd
All lovingkindnesses, all offices
Of watchful care and trembling ten-
derness.
He waked for both: he pray'd for
both: he slept
Dreaming of both: nor was his love
the less
Because it was divided, and shot
forth
Boughs on each side, laden with
wholesome shade,

Wherein we nested sleeping or
awake,
And sang aloud the matin-song of
life.

She was my foster-sister: on one
arm
The flaxen ringlets of our infancies
Wander'd, the while we rested: one
soft lap
Pillow'd us both: a common light of
eyes
Was on us as we lay: our baby lips,
Kissing one bosom, ever drew from
thence
The stream of life, one stream, one
life, one blood,
One sustenance, which, still as
thought grew large,
Still larger moulding all the house of
thought,
Made all our tastes and fancies like,
perhaps—
All—all but one; and strange to me,
and sweet,
Sweet thro' strange years to know
that whatsoe'er
Our general mother meant for me
alone,
Our mutual mother dealt to both of
us:
So what was earliest mine in earliest
life,
I shared with her in whom myself
remains.
As was our childhood, so our in-
fancy,
They tell me, was a very miracle
Of fellow-feeling and communion.
They tell me that we would not be
alone,—
We cried when we were parted; when
I wept,
Her smile lit up the rainbow on my
tears,
Stay'd on the cloud of sorrow; that
we loved
The sound of one-another's voices
more
Than the gray cuckoo loves his name,
and learn'd
To lisp in tune together; that we
slept

In the same cradle always, face to face.
 Heart beating time to heart, lip pressing lip,
 Folding each other, breathing on each other,
 Dreaming together (dreaming of each other
 They should have added), till the morning light
 Sloped thro' the pines, upon the dewy pane
 Falling, unseal'd our eyelids, and we woke
 To gaze upon each other. If this be true,
 At thought of which my whole soul languishes
 And faints, and hath no pulse, no breath—as tho'
 A man in some still garden should infuse
 Rich atar in the bosom of the rose,
 Till, drunk with its own wine, and overfull
 Of sweetness, and in smelling of itself,
 It fall on its own thorns—if this be true—
 And that way my wish leads me evermore
 Still to believe it—'tis so sweet a thought,
 Why in the utter stillness of the soul
 Doth question'd memory answer not, nor tell
 Of this our earliest, our closest-drawn,
 Most loveliest, earthly-heavenliest harmony?
 O blossom'd portal of the lonely house,
 Green prelude, April promise, glad new-year
 Of Being, which with earliest violets
 And lavish carol of clear-throated larks
 Fill'd all the March of life!—I will not speak of thee,
 These have not seen thee, these can never know thee,
 They cannot understand me. Pass we then

A term of eighteen years. Ye would but laugh,
 If I should tell you how I hoard in thought
 The faded rhymes and scraps of ancient crones,
 Gray relics of the nurseries of the world,
 Which are as gems set in my memory,
 Because she learnt them with me; or what use
 To know her father left us just before
 The daffodil was blown? or how we found
 The dead man cast upon the shore?
 All this
 Seems to the quiet daylight of your minds
 But cloud and smoke, and in the dark of mine
 Is traced with flame. Move with me to the event.
 There came a glorious morning, such a one
 As dawns but once a season. Mercury
 On such a morning would have flung himself
 From cloud to cloud, and swum with balanced wings
 To some tall mountain: when I said to her,
 'A day for Gods to stoop,' she answered, 'Ay,
 And men to soar:' for as that other gazed,
 Shading his eyes till all the fiery cloud,
 The prophet and the chariot and the steeds,
 Suck'd into oneness like a little star
 Were drunk into the inmost blue, we stood,
 When first we came from out the pines at noon,
 With hands for eaves, uplooking and almost
 Waiting to see some blessed shape in heaven,
 So bathed we were in brilliance. Never yet
 Before or after have I known the spring

Pour with such sudden deluges of
light
Into the middle summer; for that
day
Love, rising, shook his wings, and
charged the winds
With spiced May-sweets from bound
to bound, and blew
Fresh fire into the sun, and from
within
Burst thro' the heated buds, and sent
his soul
Into the songs of birds, and touch'd
far-off
His mountain-altars, his high hills,
with flame
Milder and purer.

Thro' the rocks we wound:
The great pine shook with lonely
sounds of joy
That came on the sea-wind. As
mountain streams
Our bloods ran free: the sunshine
seem'd to brood
More warmly on the heart than on
the brow.
We often paused, and, looking back,
we saw
The clefts and openings in the moun-
tains fill'd
With the blue valley and the glisten-
ing brooks,
And all the low dark groves, a land
of love!
A land of promise, a land of mem-
ory,
A land of promise flowing with the
milk
And honey of delicious memories!
And down to sea, and far as eye could
ken,
Each way from verge to verge a Holy
Land,
Still growing holier as you near'd the
bay,
For there the Temple stood.

When we had reach'd
The grassy platform on some hill, I
stoop'd,
I gather'd the wild herbs, and for her
brows

And mine made garlands of the self-
same flower,
Which she took smiling, and with my
work thus
Crown'd her clear forehead. Once or
twice she told me
(For I remember all things) to let
grow
The flowers that run poison in their
veins.
She said, 'The evil flourish in the
world.'
Then playfully she gave herself the
lie—
'Nothing in nature is unbeautiful;
So, brother, pluck and spare not.'
So I wove
Ev'n the dull-blooded poppy-stem,
'whose flower,
Hued with the scarlet of a fierce sun-
rise,
Like to the wild youth of an evil
prince,
Is without sweetness, but who crowns
himself
Above the naked poisons of his heart
In his old age.' A graceful thought
of hers
Grav'n on my fancy! And oh, how
like a nymph,
A stately mountain nymph she
look'd! how native
Unto the hills she trod on! While I
gazed
My coronal slowly disentwined itself
And fell between us both; tho' while
I gazed
My spirit leap'd as with those thrills
of bliss
That strike across the soul in prayer,
and show us
That we are surely heard. Methought
a light
Burst from the garland I had wov'n,
and stood
A solid glory on her bright black
hair;
A light methought broke from her
dark, dark eyes,
And shot itself into the singing
winds;
A mystic light flash'd ev'n from her
white robe

As from a glass in the sun, and fell
about
My footsteps on the mountains.

To what our people call 'The Hill of
Woe.'

A bridge is there, that, look'd at from
beneath
Seems but a cobweb filament to link
The yawning of an earthquake-cloven
chasm.

And thence one night, when all the
winds were loud,

A woful man (for so the story went)
Had thrust his wife and child and
dash'd himself

Into the dizzy depth below. Below,
Fierce in the strength of far descent,
a stream

Flies with a shatter'd foam along the
chasm.

The path was perilous, loosely
strewn with crags:

We mounted slowly; yet to both
there came

The joy of life in steepness overcome,
And victories of ascent, and looking
down

On all that had look'd down on us;
and joy

In breathing nearer heaven; and joy
to me.

High over all the azure-circled earth,
To breathe with her as if in heaven
itself:

And more than joy that I to her
became

Her guardian and her angel, raising
her

Still higher, past all peril, until she
saw

Beneath her feet the region far away,
Beyond the nearest mountain's bosky

Arise in open prospect—heath and

And hollow lined and wooded to the

And steep-down walls of battle-

mented rock
Gilded with broom, or shatter'd into
spires,

And glory of broad waters interfused,
Whence rose as it were breath and
steam of gold

And over all the great wood rioting
And climbing, streak'd or starr'd at
intervals

With falling brook or blossom'd bush
—and last.

Framing the mighty landscape to the west.

A purple range of mountain-cones,
between

Whose interspaces gush'd in blinding
bursts

The incorporate blaze of sun and sea.

At length
Descending from the point and stand-
ing both.

There on the tremulous bridge, that
from beneath

Had seem'd a gossamer filament up
in air,

We paused amid the splendor. All
the west

And ev'n unto the middle south was
ribb'd

And barr'd with bloom on bloom.
The sun below.

Held for a space 'twixt cloud and
wave, shower'd down

Rays of a mighty circle, weaving over
That various wilderness a tissue of

Unparallel'd, On the other side, the

moon,
Half-melted into thin blue air, stood

And still,
And pale and fibrous as a wither'd

Nor yet endured in presence of His

To indue his lustre; most unlover-

like,
Since in his absence full of light and

And giving light to others. But this

most,
Next to her presence whom I loved

so well,
Spoke loudly even into my inmost
heart

As to my outward hearing: the loud
stream,
Forth issuing from his portals in the
crag
(A visible link unto the home of my
heart),
Ran amber toward the west, and nigh
the sea
Parting my own loved mountains was
received,
Shorn of its strength, into the sympa-
thy
Of that small bay, which out to open
main
Glow'd intermingling close beneath
the sun.
Spirit of Love! that little hour was
bound
Shut in from Time, and dedicate to
thee:
Thy fires from heaven had touch'd it,
and the earth
They fell on became hallow'd ever-
more.

We turn'd: our eyes met: hers
were bright, and mine
Were dim with floating tears, that
shot the sunset
In lightnings round me; and my name
was borne
Upon her breath. Henceforth, my
name has been
A hallow'd memory like the names of
old,
A center'd, glory-circled memory,
And a peculiar treasure, brooking not
Exchange or currency: and in that
hour
A hope flow'd round me, like a golden
mist
Charm'd amid eddies of melodious
airs,
A moment, ere the onward whirlwind
shatter it,
Waver'd and floated—which was less
than Hope,
Because it lack'd the power of perfect
Hope;
But which was more and higher than
all Hope,
Because all other Hope had lower
aim;

Even that this name to which her gra-
cious lips
Did lend such gentle utterance, this
one name,
In some obscure hereafter, might in-
wreath
(How lovelier, nobler then!) her life,
her love,
With my life, love, soul, spirit, and
heart and strength.

'Brother,' she said, 'let this be
call'd henceforth
The Hill of Hope;' and I replied, 'O
sister,
My will is one with thine; the Hill of
Hope.'
Nevertheless, we did not change the
name.

I did not speak: I could not speak
my love.
Love lieth deep: Love dwells not in
lip-depths.
Love wraps his wings on either side
the heart,
Constraining it with kisses close and
warm,
Absorbing all the incense of sweet
thoughts
So that they pass not to the shrine of
sound.
Else had the life of that delighted
hour
Drunk in the largeness of the utter-
ance
Of Love; but how should Earthly
measure mete
The Heavenly-unmeasured or unlimi-
ted Love,
Who scarce can tune his high majestic
sense
Unto the thundersong that wheels the
spheres,
Scarce living in the Æolian harmony,
And flowing odor of the spacious air,
Scarce housed within the circle of
this Earth,
Be cabin'd up in words and syllables,
Which pass with that which breathes
them? Sooner Earth
Might go round Heaven, and the
strait girth of Time

Inswathe the fulness of Eternity,
Than language grasp the infinite of
Love.

O day which did enwomb that
happy hour,
Thou art blessed in the years, divin-
est day!

O Genius of that hour which dost up-
hold

Thy coronal of glory like a God,
Amid thy melancholy mates far-seen,
Who walk before thee, ever turning
round

To gaze upon thee till their eyes are
dim

With dwelling on the light and depth
of thine,

Thy name is ever worshipp'd among
hours!

Had I died then, I had not seem'd to
die,

For bliss stood round me like the
light of Heaven,—

Had I died then, I had not known the
death;

Yea had the Power from whose right
hand the light

Of Life issueth, and from whose left
hand floweth

The Shadow of Death, perennial efflu-
ences,

Whereof to all that draw the whole-
some air,

Somewhile the one must overflow the
other;

Then had he stemm'd my day with
night, and driven

My current to the fountain whence it
sprang,—

Even his own abiding excellence—
On me, methinks, that shock of gloom
had fall'n

Unfelt, and in this glory I had merged
The other, like the sun I gazed
upon,

Which seeming for the moment due
to death,

And dipping his head low beneath the
verge,

Yet bearing round about him his own
day,

In confidence of unabated strength,

Steppeth from Heaven to Heaven,
from light to light,
And holdeth his undimmed forehead
far
Into a clearer zenith, pure of cloud.

We trod the shadow of the down-
ward hill;

We past from light to dark. On the
other side

Is scoop'd a cavern and a mountain
hall,

Which none have fathom'd. If you
go far in

(The country people rumor) you
may hear

The moaning of the woman and the
child,

Shut in the secret chambers of the
rock.

I too have heard a sound—perchance
of streams

Running far on within its inmost
halls,

The home of darkness; but the cav-
ern-mouth,

Half overtrailed with a wanton weed,
Gives birth to a brawling brook, that

passing lightly
Adown a natural stair of tangled

roots,
Is presently received in a sweet grave

Of eglantines, a place of burial
Far lovelier than its cradle; for un-
seen,

But taken with the sweetness of the
place,

It makes a constant bubbling melody
That drowns the nearer echoes.

Lower down
Spreads out a little lake, that, flood-
ing, leaves

Low banks of yellow sand; and from
the woods

That belt it rise three dark, tall cy-
presses,—

Three cypresses, symbols of mortal
woe,

That men plant on graves.

Hither we came,
And sitting down upon the golden
moss,

"ALL AMONG THE MEADOWS."—Page 108.





Held converse sweet and low—low
 converse sweet,
 In which our voices bore least part.
 The wind
 Told a lovetale beside us, how he
 woo'd
 The waters, and the waters answering
 lisp'd
 To kisses of the wind, that, sick with
 love,
 Fainted at intervals, and grew again
 To utterance of passion. Ye cannot
 shape
 Fancy so fair as is this memory.
 Methought all excellence that ever
 was
 Had drawn herself from many thou-
 sand years,
 And all the separate Edens of this
 earth,
 To centre in this place and time. I
 listen'd,
 And her words stole with most pre-
 vailing sweetness
 Into my heart, as thronging fancies
 come
 To boys and girls when summer days
 are new,
 And soul and heart and body are all
 at ease :
 What marvel my Camilla told me all?
 It was so happy an hour, so sweet a
 place,
 And I was as the brother of her blood,
 And by that name I moved upon her
 breath;
 Dear name, which had too much of
 nearness in it
 And heralded the distance of this
 time!
 At first her voice was very sweet and
 low,
 As if she were afraid of utterance;
 But in the onward current of her
 speech,
 (As echoes of the hollow-banked
 brooks
 Are fashion'd by the channel which
 they keep),
 Her words did of their meaning bor-
 row sound,
 Her cheek did catch the color of her
 words.

I heard and trembled, yet I could but
 hear;
 My heart paused—my raised eyelids
 would not fall,
 But still I kept my eyes upon the sky.
 I seem'd the only part of Time stood
 still,
 And saw the motion of all other
 things;
 While her words, syllable by syllable,
 Like water, drop by drop, upon my
 ear
 Fell; and I wish'd, yet wish'd her not
 to speak;
 But she spake on, for I did name no
 wish,
 What marvel my Camilla told me all
 Her maiden dignities of Hope and
 Love—
 'Perchance,' she said, 'return'd.'
 Even then the stars
 Did tremble in their stations as I
 gazed;
 But she spake on, for I did name no
 wish,
 No wish—no hope. Hope was not
 wholly dead,
 But breathing hard at the approach of
 Death,—
 Camilla, my Camilla, who was mine
 No longer in the dearest sense of
 mine—
 For all the secret of her inmost heart,
 And all the maiden empire of her
 mind,
 Lay like a map before me, and I saw
 There, where I hoped myself to reign
 as king,
 There, where that day I crown'd my-
 self as king,
 There in my realm and even on my
 throne,
 Another! then it seem'd as tho' a link
 Of some tight chain within my inmost
 frame
 Was riven in twain: that life I heeded
 not
 Flow'd from me, and the darkness of
 the grave,
 The darkness of the grave and utter
 night,
 Did swallow up my vision; at her
 feet,

Even the feet of her I loved, I fell,
Smit with exceeding sorrow unto
Death.

Then had the earth beneath me
yawning cloven
With such a sound as when an ice-
berg splits
From cope to base—had Heaven from
all her doors,
With all her golden thresholds clashing,
roll'd
Her heaviest thunder—I had lain as
dead,
Mute, blind and motionless as then I
lay;
Dead, for henceforth there was no
life for me!
Mute, for henceforth what use were
words to me!
Blind, for the day was as the night to
me!
The night to me was kinder than the
day;
The night in pity took away my day,
Because my grief as yet was newly
born
Of eyes too weak to look upon the
light;
And thro' the hasty notice of the ear
Frail Life was startled from the tender
love
Of him she brooded over. Would I
had lain
Until the plaited ivy-tress had wound
Round my worn limbs, and the wild
brier had driven
Its knotted thorns thro' my unpaining
brows,
Leaning its roses on my faded eyes,
The wind had blown above me, and
the rain
Had fall'n upon me, and the gilded
snake
Had nestled in this bosom-throne of
Love,
But I had been at rest for evermore.

Long time entrancement held me.
All too soon
Life (like a wanton too-officious friend,
Who will not *hear* denial, vain and
rude

With proffer of unwish'd-for services)
Entering all the avenues of sense
Past thro' into his citadel, the brain,
With hated warmth of apprehensive-
ness.

And first the chillness of the sprinkled
brook
Smote on my brows, and then I seem'd
to hear
Its murmur, as the drowning seaman
hears,
Who with his head below the surface
dropt
Listens the muffled booming indistinct
Of the confused floods, and dimly
knows
His head shall rise no more: and then
came in
The white light of the weary moon
above,
Diffused and molten into flaky cloud.
Was my sight drunk that it did shape
to me
Him who should own that name?
Were it not well

If so be that the echo of that name
Ringing within the fancy had updrawn
A fashion and a phantasm of the form
It should attach to? Phantom!—had
the ghastliest

That ever lusted for a body, sucking
The foul steam of the grave to thicken
by it,

There in the shuddering moonlight
brought its face

And what it has for eyes as close to
mine

As he did—better that than his, than
he

The friend, the neighbor, Lionel, the
beloved,

The loved, the lover, the happy
Lionel,

The low-voiced, tender-spirited Lionel,
All joy, to whom my agony was a joy.
O how her choice did leap forth from
his eyes!

O how her love did clothe itself in
smiles

About his lips! and—not one mo-
ment's grace—

Then when the effect weigh'd seas
upon my head

To come my way! to twit me with the
cause!

Was not the land as free thro' all
her ways
To him as me? Was not his wont to
walk
Between the going light and growing
night?

Had I not learnt my loss before he
came?
Could that be more because he came
my way?

Why should he not come my way if
he would?

And yet to-night, to-night—when all
my wealth

Flash'd from me in a moment and I
fell

Beggar'd for ever—why *should* he
come my way

Robed in those robes of light I must
not wear,

With that great crown of beams about
his brows—

Come like an angel to a damned soul,
To tell him of the bliss he had with
God—

Come like a careless and a greedy
heir

That scarce can wait the reading of
the will

Before he takes possession? Was
mine a mood

To be invaded rudely, and not rather
A sacred, secret, unapproach'd woe,

Unspeaking? I was shut up with
Grief;

She took the body of my past de-
light,

Narded and swathed and balm'd it for
herself,

And laid it in a sepulchre of rock
Never to rise again. I was led mute

Into her temple like a sacrifice;
I was the High Priest in her holiest
place,

Not to be loudly broken in upon.

Oh friend, thoughts deep and heavy
as these well-nigh

O'erbore the limits of my brain: but
he

Bent o'er me, and my neck his arm
upstay'd.

I thought it was an adder's fold, and
once

I strove to disengage myself, but
fail'd,

Being so feeble: she bent above me,
too;

Wan was her cheek; for whatsoe'er
of blight

Lives in the dewy touch of pity had
made

The red rose there a pale one—and
her eyes—

I saw the moonlight glitter on their
tears—

And some few drops of that distress-
ful rain

Fell on my face, and her long ringlets
moved,

Drooping and beaten by the breeze,
and brush'd

My fallen forehead in their to and
fro,

For in the sudden anguish of her
heart

Loosed from their simple thrall they
had flow'd abroad,

And floated on and parted round her
neck,

Mantling her form halfway. She,
when I woke,

Something she ask'd, I know not
what, and ask'd,

Unanswer'd, since I spake not; for
the sound

Of that dear voice so musically low,
And now first heard with any sense of

pain,
As it had taken life away before,

Choked all the syllables, that strove
to rise

From my full heart.

The blissful lover, too,
From his great hoard of happiness

distill'd
Some drops of solace; like a vain
rich man,

That, having always prosper'd in the
world,

Folding his hands, deals comfortable
words

To hearts wounded for ever; yet, in
truth,
Fair speech was his and delicate of
phrase,
Falling in whispers on the sense, address'd
More to the inward than the outward
ear,
As rain of the midsummer midnight
soft,
Scarce-heard, recalling fragrance and
the green
Of the dead spring: but mine was
wholly dead,
No bud, no leaf, no flower, no fruit
for me.
Yet who had done, or who had
suffer'd wrong?
And why was I to darken their pure
love,
If, as I found, they two did love each
other,
Because my own was darken'd? Why
was I
To cross between their happy star
and them?
To stand a shadow by their shining
doors,
And vex them with my darkness?
Did I love her?
Ye know that I did love her; to this
present
My full-orb'd love has waned not.
Did I love her,
And could I look upon her tearful eyes?
What had *she* done to weep? Why
should *she* weep?
O innocent of spirit—let my heart
Break rather—whom the gentlest airs
of Heaven
Should kiss with an unwonted gentle-
ness.
Her love did murder mine? What
then? She deem'd
I wore a brother's mind: she call'd
me brother:
She told me all her love: she shall
not weep.

The brightness of a burning
thought, awhile
In battle with the glooms of my dark
will,

Moonlike emerged, and to itself lit
up
There on the depth of an unfathom'd
woe
Reflex of action. Starting up at once,
As from a dismal dream of my own
death,
I, for I loved her, lost my love in
Love;
I, for I loved her, graspt the hand she
lov'd,
And laid it in her own, and sent my
cry
Thro' the blank night to Him who
loving made
The happy and the unhappy love, that
He
Would hold the hand of blessing over
them,
Lionel, the happy, and her, and her,
his bride!
Let them so love that men and boys
may say,
'Lo! how they love each other!' till
their love
Shall ripen to a proverb, unto all
Known, when their faces are forgot in
the land—
One golden dream of love, from which
may death
Awake them with heaven's music in a
life
More living to some happier happi-
ness,
Swallowing its precedent in victory.
And as for me, Camilla, as for me,—
The dew of tears is an unwholesome
dew,
They will but sicken the sick plant
the more.
Deem that I love thee but as brothers
do,
So shalt thou love me still as sisters
do;
Or if thou dream aught farther, dream
but how
I could have loved thee, had there
been none else
To love as lovers, loved again by
thee.

Or this, or somewhat like to this, I
spake,

When I beheld her weep so ruefully;
For sure my love should ne'er indue
the front
And mask of Hate, who lives on
others' moans.
Shall Love pledge Hatred in her bitter
draughts,
And batten on her poisons? Love
forbid!
Love passeth not the threshold of
cold Hate,
And Hate is strange beneath the roof
of Love.
O Love, if thou be'st Love, dry up
these tears
Shed for the love of Love; for tho'
mine image,
The subject of thy power, be cold in
her,
Yet, like cold snow, it melteth in the
source
Of these sad tears, and feeds their
downward flow.
So Love, arraign'd to judgment and to
death,
Received unto himself a part of blame,
Being guiltless, as an innocent pris-
oner,
Who, when the woful sentence hath
been past,
And all the clearness of his fame hath
gone
Beneath the shadow of the curse of
man,
First falls asleep in swoon, wherefrom
awaked,
And looking round upon his tearful
friends,
Forthwith and in his agony con-
ceives
A shameful sense as of a cleaving
crime—
For whence without some guilt should
such grief be?

So died that hour, and fell into the
abysm
Of forms outworn, but not to me out-
worn,
Who never hail'd another—was there
one?
There might be one—one other, worth
the life

That made it sensible. So that hour
died
Like odor rapt into the winged wind
Borne into alien lands and far away.

There be some hearts so airily
built, that they,
They—when their love is wreck'd—if
Love can wreck—
On that sharp ridge of utmost doom
ride highly
Above the perilous seas of Change
and Chance;
Nay, more, hold out the lights of
cheerfulness;
As the tall ship, that many a dreary
year
Knit to some dismal sandbank far at
sea,
All thro' the livelong hours of utter
dark,
Showers slanting light upon the dolo-
rous wave.
For me—what light, what gleam on
those black ways
Where Love could walk with ban-
ish'd Hope no more?

It was ill-done to part you, Sisters
fair;
Love's arms were wreath'd about the
neck of Hope,
And Hope kiss'd Love, and Love
drew in her breath
In that close kiss, and drank her
whisper'd tales.
They said that Love would die when
Hope was gone,
And Love mourn'd long, and sor-
row'd after Hope;
At last she sought out Memory, and
they trod
The same old paths where Love had
walk'd with Hope,
And Memory fed the soul of Love
with tears.

II.

FROM that time forth I would not see
her more;
But many weary moons I lived
alone—

Alone, and in the heart of the great forest.

Sometimes upon the hills beside the sea

All day I watch'd the floating isles of shade,

And sometimes on the shore, upon the sands

Insensibly I drew her name, until
The meaning of the letters shot into
My brain; anon the wanton billow wash'd

Them over, till they faded like my love.

The hollow caverns heard me—the black brooks

Of the midforest heard me—the soft winds,

Laden with thistledown and seeds of flowers,

Paused in their course to hear me, for my voice

Was all of thee: the merry linnet knew me,

The squirrel knew me, and the dragonfly

Shot by me like a flash of purple fire.

The rough brier tore my bleeding palms; the hemlock,

Brow-high, did strike my forehead as I past;

Yet trod I not the wildflower in my path,

Nor bruised the wildbird's egg.

Was this the end?

Why grew we then together in one plot?

Why fed we from one fountain? drew one sun?

Why were our mother's branches of one stem?

Why were we one in all things, save in that

Where to have been one had been the cope and crown

Of all I hoped and fear'd?—if that same nearness

Were father to this distance, and that one

Vauntcourier to this double? if Affec-
tion

Living slew Love, and Sympathy
hew'd out
The bosom-sepulchre of Sympathy?

Chiefly I sought the cavern and the hill

Where last we roam'd together, for the sound

Of the loud stream was pleasant, and the wind

Came wooingly with woodbine smells. Sometimes

All day I sat within the cavern-mouth, Fixing my eyes on those three cy-

press-cones

That spired above the wood; and with mad hand

Tearing the bright leaves of the ivy-screen,

I cast them in the noisy brook beneath,

And watch'd them till they vanish'd from my sight

Beneath the bower of wreathed eg-lantines:

And all the fragments of the living rock

(Huge blocks, which some old trem-bling of the world

Had loosen'd from the mountain, till they fell

Half-digging their own graves) these in my agony

Did I make bare of all the golden moss,

Wherewith the dashing runnel in the spring

Had liveried them all over. In my brain

The spirit seem'd to flag from thought to thought,

As moonlight wandering thro' a mist: my blood

Crept like marsh drains thro' all my languid limbs;

The motions of my heart seem'd far within me,

Unfrequent, low, as tho' it told its pulses;

And yet it shook me, that my frame would shudder,

As if 'twere drawn asunder by the rack.

But over the deep graves of Hope
and Fear,
And all the broken palaces of the
Past,
Brooded one master-passion ever-
more,
Like to a low-hung and a fiery sky
Above some fair metropolis, earth-
shock'd,—
Hung round with ragged rims and
burning folds,—
Embathing all with wild and woful
hues,
Great hills of ruins, and collapsed
masses
Of thundershaken columns indistinct,
And fused together in the tyrannous
light—
Ruins, the ruins of all my life and me!

Sometimes I thought Camilla was
no more,
Some one had told me she was dead,
and ask'd
If I would see her burial: then I
seem'd
To rise, and through the forest-shadow
borne
With more than mortal swiftness, I
ran down
The steepy sea-bank, till I came upon
The rear of a procession, curving
round
The silver-sheeted bay: in front of
which
Six stately virgins, all in white, up-
bare
A broad earth-sweeping pall of whit-
est lawn,
Wreathed round the bier with gar-
lands: in the distance,
From out the yellow woods upon the
hill
Look'd forth the summit and the pin-
nacles
Of a gray steeple—thence at inter-
vals
A low bell tolling. All the pageant-
ry,
Save those six virgins which upheld
the bier,
Were stole from head to foot in
flowing black;

One walk'd abreast with me, and veil'd
his brow,
And he was loud in weeping and in
praise
Of her, we follow'd: a strong sympa-
thy
Shook all my soul: I flung myself
upon him
In tears and cries: I told him all my
love,
How I had loved her from the first;
whereat
He shrank and howl'd, and from his
brow drew back
His hand to push me from him; and
the face,
The very face and form of Lionel
Flash'd thro' my eyes into my inner-
most brain,
And at his feet I seem'd to faint and
fall,
To fall and die away. I could not
rise
Albeit I strove to follow. They past
on,
The lordly Phantasms! in their float-
ing folds
They past and were no more: but I
had fallen
Prone by the dashing runnel on the
grass.

Always the inaudible invisible
thought,
Artificer and subject, lord and slave,
Shaped by the audible and visible,
Moulded the audible and visible;
All crisped sounds of wave and leaf
and wind,
Flatter'd the fancy of my fading
brain;
The cloud-pavilion'd element, the
wood,
The mountain, the three cypresses,
the cave,
Storm, sunset, glows and glories of
the moon
Below black firs, when silent creep-
ing winds
Laid the long night in silver streaks
and bars,
Were wrought into the tissue of my
dream:

The moanings in the forest, the loud
brook,
Cries of the partridge like a rusty key
Turn'd in a lock, owl-whoop and dor-
hawk-whirr
Awoke me not, but were a part of
sleep,
And voices in the distance calling to
me
And in my vision bidding me dream
on,
Like sounds without the twilight
realm of dreams,
Which wander round the bases of the
hills,
And murmur at the low-dropt eaves
of sleep,
Half-entering the portals. Often-
times
The vision had fair prelude, in the
end
Opening on darkness, stately vesti-
bules
To caves and shows of Death:
whether the mind,
With some revenge—even to itself
unknown,—
Made strange division of its suffer-
ing
With her, whom to have suffering
view'd had been
Extremest pain; or that the clear-
eyed Spirit,
Being blunted in the Present, grew at
length
Prophetical and prescient of whate'er
The Future had in store: or that
which most
Enchains belief, the sorrow of my
spirit
Was of so wide a compass it took in
All I had loved, and my dull agony,
Ideally to her transferr'd, became
Anguish intolerable.

The day waned;
Alone I sat with her: about my brow
Her warm breath floated in the utter-
ance
Of silver-corded tones: her lips were
sunder'd
With smiles of tranquil bliss, which
broke in light

Like morning from her eyes—her
eloquent eyes,
(As I have seen them many a hun-
dred times)
Fill'd all with pure clear fire, thro'
mine down rain'd
Their spirit-searching splendors. As
a vision
Unto a haggard prisoner, iron-stay'd
In damp and dismal dungeons under-
ground,
Confined on points of faith, when
strength is shock'd
With torment, and expectancy of
worse
Upon the morrow, thro' the ragged
walls,
All unawares before his half-shut
eyes,
Comes in upon him in the dead of
night,
And with the excess of sweetness and
of awe,
Makes the heart tremble, and the
sight run over
Upon his steely gyves; so those fair
eyes
Shone on my darkness, forms which
ever stood
Within the magic cirque of memory.
Invisible but deathless, waiting still
The edict of the will to reassume
The semblance of those rare realities
Of which they were the mirrors. Now
the light
Which was their life, burst through
the cloud of thought
Keen, irrepressible.

It was a room
Within the summer-house of which I
spake,
Hung round with paintings of the sea,
and one
A vessel in mid-ocean, her heaved
prow
Clambering, the mast bent and the
ravin wind
In her sail roaring. From the outer
day,
Betwixt the close-set ivies came a
broad
And solid beam of isolated light,

Crowded with driving atomies, and
fell
Slanting upon that picture, from
prime youth
Well-known well-loved. She drew it
long ago
Forthgazing on the waste and open
sea,
One morning when the upblown bil-
low ran
Shoreward beneath red clouds, and I
had pour'd
Into the shadowing pencil's naked
forms
Color and life: it was a bond and
seal
Of friendship, spoken of with tearful
smiles;
A monument of childhood and of
love;
The pöesy of childhood; my lost
love
Symbol'd in storm. We gazed on it
together
In mute and glad remembrance, and
each heart
Grew closer to the other, and the eye
Was riveted and charm-bound, gaz-
ing like
The Indian on a still-eyed snake, low-
couch'd—
A beauty which is death; when all at
once
That painted vessel, as with inner
life,
Began to heave upon that painted
sea;
An earthquake, my loud heart-beats,
made the ground
Reel under us, and all at once, soul,
life
And breath and motion, past and
flow'd away
To those unreal billows: round and
round
A whirlwind caught and bore us;
mighty gyres
Rapid and vast, of hissing spray
wind-driven
Far thro' the dizzy dark. Aloud she
shriek'd;
My heart was cloven with pain; I
wound my arms

About her: we whirl'd giddily; the
wind
Sung; but I clasp'd her without fear:
her weight
Shrank in my grasp, and over my dim
eyes,
And parted lips which drank her
breath, down-hung
The jaws of Death: I, groaning, from
me flung
Her empty phantom: all the sway
and whirl
Of the storm dropt to windless calm,
and I
Down welter'd thro' the dark ever and
ever.

III.

I CAME one day and sat among the
stones
Strewn in the entry of the moaning
cave;
A morning air, sweet after rain, ran
over
The rippling levels of the lake, and
blew
Coolness and moisture and all smells
of bud
And foliage from the dark and drip-
ping woods
Upon my fever'd brows that shook
and throb'd
From temple unto temple. To what
height
The day had grown I know not.
Then came on me
The hollow tolling of the bell, and
all
The vision of the bier. As hereto-
fore
I walk'd behind with one who veil'd
his brow,
Methought by slow degrees the sullen
bell
Toll'd quicker, and the breakers on
the shore
Sloped into louder surf: those that
went with me,
And those that held the bier before
my face,
Moved with one spirit round about the
bay,

Trod swifter steps; and while I
 walk'd with these
 In marvel at that gradual change, I
 thought
 Four bells instead of one began to
 ring,
 Four merry bells, four merry marriage
 bells,
 In clanging cadence jangling peal on
 peal—
 A long loud clash of rapid marriage-
 bells.
 Then those who led the van, and
 those in rear,
 Rush'd into dance, and like wild Bac-
 chanals
 Fled onward to the steeple in the
 woods:
 I, too, was borne along and felt the
 blast
 Beat on my heated eyelids: all at
 once
 The front rank made a sudden halt;
 the bells
 Lapsed into frightful stillness; the
 surge fell
 From thunder into whispers; those
 six maids
 With shrieks and ringing laughter on
 the sand
 Threw down the bier; the woods
 upon the hill
 Waved with a sudden gust that sweep-
 ing down
 Took the edges of the pall, and blew
 it far
 Until it hung, a little silver cloud
 Over the sounding seas: I turn'd:
 my heart
 Shrank in me, like a snowflake in the
 hand,
 Waiting to see the settled countenance
 Of her I loved, adorn'd with fading
 flowers.
 But she from out her death-like chrys-
 alis,
 She from her bier, as into fresher life,
 My sister, and my cousin, and my
 love,
 Leapt lightly clad in bridal white—her
 hair
 Studded with one rich Provence rose
 —a light

Of smiling welcome round her lips—
 her eyes
 And cheeks as bright as when she
 climb'd the hill.
 One hand she reach'd to those that
 came behind,
 And while I mused nor yet endured
 to take
 So rich a prize, the man who stood
 with me
 Stept gaily forward, throwing down
 his robes,
 And claspt her hand in his: again the
 bells
 Jangled and clang'd: again the stormy
 surf
 Crash'd in the shingle: and the whirl-
 ing rout
 Led by those two rush'd into dance,
 and fled
 Wind-footed to the steeple in the
 woods,
 Till they were swallow'd in the leafy
 bowers,
 And I stood sole beside the vacant
 bier.
 There, there, my latest vision—then
 the event!

IV.

THE GOLDEN SUPPER.¹*(Another speaks.)*

HE flies the event: he leaves the
 event to me:
 Poor Julian—how he rush'd away;
 the bells,
 Those marriage-bells, echoing in ear
 and heart—
 But cast a parting glance at me, you
 saw,
 As who should say 'Continue.' Well
 he had
 One golden hour—of triumph shall I
 say?
 Solace at least—before he left his
 home.

¹ This poem is founded upon a story in
 Boccaccio. See Introduction, p. 355.

Would you had seen him in that
hour of his!
He moved thro' all of it majesti-
cally—
Restrain'd himself quite to the close—
but now—

Whether they *were* his lady's mar-
riage-bells,
Or prophets of them in his fantasy,
I never ask'd: but Lionel and the girl
Were wedded, and our Julian came
again
Back to his mother's house among the
pines.
But these, their gloom, the mountains
and the Bay,
The whole land weigh'd him down as
Ætna does
The Giant of Mythology: he would
go,
Would leave the land for ever, and
had gone
Surely, but for a whisper, 'Go not
yet,'
Some warning—sent divinely—as it
seem'd
By that which follow'd—but of this I
deem
As of the visions that he told—the
event
Glanced back upon them in his
after life,
And partly made them—tho' he knew
it not.

And thus he stay'd and would not
look at her—
No not for months: but, when the
eleventh moon
After their marriage lit the lover's
Bay,
Heard yet once more the tolling bell,
and said,
Would you could tol me out of life,
but found—
All softly as his mother broke it to
him—
A crueller reason than a crazy ear,
For that low knell tolling his lady
dead—
Dead—and had lain three days with-
out a pulse:

All that look'd on her had pronounced
her dead.
And so they bore her (for in Julian's
land
They never nail a dumb head up in
elm),
Bore her free-faced to the free airs of
heaven,
And laid her in the vault of her own
kin.

What did he then? not die: he is
here and hale—
Not plunge headforemost from the
mountain there,
And leave the name of Lover's Leap:
not he:
He knew the meaning of the whisper
now,
Thought that he knew it. 'This, I
stay'd for this;
O love, I have not seen you for so
long.
Now, now, will I go down into the
grave,
I will be all alone with all I love,
And kiss her on the lips. She is his
no more:
The dead returns to me, and I go
down
To kiss the dead.'

The fancy stirr'd him so
He rose and went, and entering the
dim vault,
And, making there a sudden light, be-
held
All round about him that which all
will be.
The light was but a flash, and went
again.
Then at the far end of the vault he
saw
His lady with the moonlight on her
face;
Her breast as in a shadow-prison,
bars
Of black and bands of silver, which
the moon
Struck from an open grating over-
head
High in the wall, and all the rest of
her

Drown'd in the gloom and horror of
the vault.

'It was my wish,' he said, 'to pass,
to sleep,
To rest, to be with her—till the great
day
Peal'd on us with that music which
rights all,
And raised us hand in hand.' And,
kneeling there
Down in the dreadful dust that once
was man,
Dust, as he said, that once was loving
hearts,
Hearts that had beat with such a love
as mine—
Not such as mine, no, nor for such as
her—
He softly put his arm about her
neck
And kiss'd her more than once, till
helpless death
And silence made him bold—nay, but
I wrong him,
He revered his dear lady even in
death;
But, placing his true hand upon her
heart,
'O, you warm heart,' he moan'd, 'not
even death
Can chill you all at once:' then start-
ing, thought
His dreams had come again. 'Do I
wake or sleep?
Or am I made immortal, or my love
Mortal once more?' It beat—the
heart—it beat:
Faint—but it beat: at which his own
began
To pulse with such a vehemence that it
drown'd
The feeblér motion underneath his
hand.
But when at last his doubts were
satisfied,
He raised her softly from the sepul-
chre,
And, wrapping her all over with the
cloak
He came in, and now striding fast,
and now
Sitting awhile to rest, but evermore

Holding his golden burthen in his
arms,
So bore her thro' the solitary land
Back to the mother's house where
she was born.

There the good mother's kindly
ministering,
With half a night's appliances, re-
call'd
Her fluttering life: she rais'd an eye
that ask'd
'Where?' till the things familiar to
her youth
Had made a silent answer: then she
spoke
'Here! and how came I here?' and
learning it
(They told her somewhat rashly as I
think)
At once began to wander and to
wail,
'Ay, but you know that you must give
me back:
Send! bid him come;' but Lionel was
away—
Stung by his loss had vanish'd, none
knew where.
'He casts me out,' she wept, and,
goes—a wail
That seeming something, yet saw
nothing, born
Not from believing mind, but shat-
ter'd nerve,
Yet haunting Julian, as her own re-
proof
At some precipitance in her burial.
Then, when her own true spirit had
return'd,
'Oh yes, and you,' she said, 'and none
but you?
For you have given me life and love
again,
And none but you yourself shall tell
him of it,
And you shall give me back when he
returns.'
'Stay then a little,' answer'd Julian,
'here,
And keep yourself, none knowing, to
yourself;
And I will do your will. I may not
stay,

No, not an hour; but send me notice
of him
When he returns, and then will I re-
turn,
And I will make a solemn offering of
you
To him you love.' And faintly she
replied,
'And I will do *your* will, and none
shall know.'

Not know? with such a secret to be
known.
But all their house was old and loved
them both,
And all the house had known the
loves of both;
Had died almost to serve them any
way,
And all the land was waste and soli-
tary:
And then he rode away; but after
this,
An hour or two, Camilla's travail
came
Upon her, and that day a boy was
born,
Heir of his face and land, to Lionel.

And thus our lonely lover rode
away,
And pausing at a hostel in a marsh,
There fever seized upon him: myself
was then
Travelling that land, and meant to
rest an hour;
And sitting down to such a base re-
past,
It makes me angry yet to speak of
it—
I heard a groaning overhead, and
climb'd
The moulder'd stairs (for everything
was vile)
And in a loft, with none to wait on
him,
Found, as it seem'd, a skeleton alone,
Raving of dead men's dust and beat-
ing hearts.

A dismal hostel in a dismal land,
A flat malarian world of reed and
rush!

But there from fever and my care of
him
Sprang up a friendship that may help
us yet.
For while we roam'd along the dreary
coast,
And waited for her message, piece by
piece
I learnt the drearier story of his
life;
And, tho' he loved and honor'd Li-
onel,
Found that the sudden wail his lady
made
Dwelt in his fancy: did he know her
worth,
Her beauty even? should he not be
taught,
Ev'n by the price that others set upon
it,
The value of that jewel he had to
guard?

Suddenly came her notice and we
past,
I with our lover to his native Bay.

This love is of the brain, the mind,
the soul:
That makes the sequel pure; tho'
some of us
Beginning at the sequel know no
more.
Not such am I: and yet I say the
bird
That will not hear my call, however
sweet,
But if my neighbor whistle answers
him—
What matter? there are others in the
wood.
Yet when I saw her (and I thought
him crazed,
Tho' not with such a craziness as
needs
A cell and keeper), those dark eyes
of hers—
Oh! such dark eyes! and not her
eyes alone,
But all from these to where she
touch'd on earth,
For such a craziness as Julian's look'd
No less than one divine apology.

So sweetly and so modestly she
came
To greet us, her young hero in her
arms!
'Kiss him,' she said. 'You gave me
life again.
He, but for you, had never seen it
once.
His other father you! Kiss him, and
then
Forgive him, if his name be Julian
too.'

Talk of lost hopes and broken
heart! his own
Sent such a flame into his face, I
knew
Some sudden vivid pleasure hit him
there.

But he was all the more resolved to
go,
And sent at once to Lionel, praying
him
By that great love they both had
borne the dead,
To come and revel for one hour with
him
Before he left the land for evermore;
And then to friends—they were not
many—who lived
Scatteringly about that lonely land of
his,
And bad them to a banquet of fare-
wells.

And Julian made a solemn feast: I
never
Sat at a costlier; for all round his
hall
From column on to column, as in a
wood,
Not such as here—an equatorial one,
Great garlands swung and blossom'd;
and beneath,
Heirlooms, and ancient miracles of
Art,
Chalice and salver, wines that,
Heaven knows when,
Had suck'd the fire of some forgot-
ten sun,
And kept it thro' a hundred years of
gloom,

Yet glowing in a heart of ruby—cups
Where nymph and God ran ever
round in gold—
Others of glass as costly—some with
gems
Moveable and resettable at will,
And trebling all the rest in value—Ah
heavens!
Why need I tell you all?—suffice to
say
That whatsoever such a house as his,
And his was old, has in it rare or fair
Was brought before the guest: and
they, the guests,
Wonder'd at some strange light in
Julian's eyes
(I told you that he had his golden
hour),
And such a feast, ill-suited as it
seem'd
To such a time, to Lionel's loss and
his
And that resolved self-exile from a
land
He never would revisit, such a feast
So rich, so strange, and stranger ev'n
than rich,
But rich as for the nuptials of a king.

And stranger yet, at one end of the
hall
Two great funeral curtains, looping
down,
Parted a little ere they met the floor,
About a picture of his lady, taken
Some years before, and falling hid the
frame.
And just above the parting was a
lamp:
So the sweet figure folded round with
night
Seem'd stepping out of darkness with
a smile.

Well then—our solemn feast—we
ate and drank,
And might—the wines being of such
nobleness—
I have jested also, but for Julian's eyes,
And something weird and wild about
it all:
What was it? for our lover seldom
spoke,

Scarce touch'd the meats ; but ever
and anon
A priceless goblet with a priceless
wine
Arising, show'd he drank beyond his
use ;
And when the feast was near an end,
he said :

'There is a custom in the Orient,
friends—
I read of it in Persia—when a man
Will honor those who feast with him,
he brings
And shows them whatsoever he ac-
counts
Of all his treasures the most beautiful,
Gold, jewels, arms, whatever it may be.
This custom—'

Pausing here a moment, all
The guests broke in upon him with
meeting hands
And cries about the banquet—' Beau-
tiful !
Who could desire more beauty at a
feast ?'

The lover answer'd, ' There is more
than one
Here sitting who desires it. Laud
me not
Before my time, but hear me to the
close.
This custom steps yet further when
the guest
Is loved and honor'd to the utter-
most.
For after he hath shown him gems or
gold,
He brings and sets before him in rich
guise
That which is thrice as beautiful as
these,
The beauty that is dearest to his
heart—
" O my heart's lord, would I could
show you," he says,
" Ev'n my heart too." And I pro-
pose to-night
To show you what is dearest to my
heart,
And my heart too.

' But solve me first a doubt.
I knew a man, nor many years ago ;
He had a faithful servant, one who
loved
His master more than all on earth
beside.
He falling sick, and seeming close on
death,
His master would not wait until he
died,
But bad his menials bear him from
the door,
And leave him in the public way to
die.
I knew another, not so long ago,
Who found the dying servant, took
him home,
And fed, and cherish'd him, and
saved his life.
I ask you now, should this first master
claim
His service, whom does it belong to ?
him
Who thrust him out, or him who
saved his life ?'

This question, so flung down before
the guests,
And balanced either way by each, at
length
When some were doubtful how the
law would hold,
Was handed over by consent of all
To one who had not spoken, Lionel.

Fair speech was his, and delicate of
phrase.
And he beginning languidly—his loss
Weigh'd on him yet—but warming as
he went,
Glanced at the point of law, to pass
it by,
Affirming that as long as either lived,
By all the laws of love and grateful-
ness,
The service of the one so saved was
due
All to the savor—adding, with a
smile,
The first for many weeks—a semi-
smile
As at a strong conclusion—' body and
soul

And life and limbs, all his to work his will.'

Then Julian made a secret sign to me
To bring Camilla down before them all.

And crossing her own picture as she came,
And looking as much lovelier as herself

Is lovelier than all others—on her head

A diamond circlet, and from under this

A veil, that seemed no more than gilded air,

Flying by each fine ear, an Eastern gauze

With seeds of gold—so, with that grace of hers,

Slow-moving as a wave against the wind,

That flings a mist behind it in the sun—

And bearing high in arms the mighty babe,

The younger Julian, who himself was crown'd

With roses, none so rosy as himself—
And over all her babe and her the jewels

Of many generations of his house
Sparkled and flash'd, for he had decked them out

As for a solemn sacrifice of love—
So she came in:—I am long in telling it,

I never yet beheld a thing so strange,
Sad, sweet, and strange together—
floated in—

While all the guests in mute amazement rose—

And slowly pacing to the middle hall,
Before the board, there paused and stood, her breast

Hard-heaving, and her eyes upon her feet,

Not daring yet to glance at Lionel.
But him she carried, him nor lights nor feasts

Dazed or amazed, nor eyes of men;
who cared

Only to use his own, and staring wide
And hungering for the gilt and jewell'd world

About him, look'd, as he is like to prove,

When Julian goes, the lord of all he saw.

'My guests,' said Julian. 'you are honor'd now

Ev'n to the uttermost: in her behold

Of all my treasures the most beautiful,

Of all things upon earth the dearest to me.'

Then waving us a sign to seat ourselves,

Led his dear lady to a chair of state.
And I, by Lionel sitting, saw his face

Fire, and dead ashes and all fire again

Thrice in a second, felt him tremble too,

And heard him muttering, 'So like, so like;

She never had a sister. I knew none.
Some cousin of his and hers—O God, so like!'

And then he suddenly ask'd her if she were.

She shook, and cast her eyes down, and was dumb.

And then some other question'd if she came

From foreign lands, and still she did not speak.

Another, if the boy were hers: but she

To all their queries answer'd not a word,

Which made the amazement more, till one of them

Said, shuddering, 'Her spectre!'

But his friend

Replied, in half a whisper, 'Not at least

The spectre that will speak if spoken to.

Terrible pity, if one so beautiful

Prove, as I almost dread to find her, dumb!'

But Julian, sitting by her, answer'd
all:

'She is but dumb, because in her you
see

That faithful servant whom we spoke
about,

Obedient to her second master now;
Which will not last. I have here
to-night a guest

So bound to me by common love and
loss—

What! shall I bind him more? in his
behalf,

Shall I exceed the Persian, giving him
That which of all things is the dear-
est to me,

Not only showing? and he himself
pronounced

That my rich gift is wholly mine to
give.

'Now all be dumb, and promise all
of you

Not to break in on what I say by word
Or whisper, while I show you all
my heart.'

And then began the story of his love
As here to-day, but not so wordily—
The passionate moment would not
suffer that—

Past thro' his visions to the burial;
thence

Down to this last strange hour in his
own hall;

And then rose up, and with him all
his guests

Once more as by enchantment; all but
he,

Lionel, who fain had risen, but fell
again,

And sat as if in chains—to whom he
said:

'Take my free gift, my cousin, for
your wife;

And were it only for the giver's sake,
And tho' she seem so like the one you
lost,

Yet cast her not away so suddenly,
Lest there be none left here to bring
her back:

I leave this land forever.' Here he
ceased.

Then taking his dear lady by one
hand,

And bearing on one arm the noble
babe,

He slowly brought them both to Lion-
nel.

And there the widower husband and
dead wife

Rush'd each at each with a cry, that
rather seem'd

For some new death than for a life re-
new'd;

Whereat the very babe began to wail;
At once they turn'd, and caught and

brought him in
To their charm'd circle, and, half kill-
ing him

With kisses, round him closed and
claspt again.

But Lionel, when at last he freed him-
self

From wife and child, and lifted up a
face

All over glowing with the sun of life,
And love, and boundless thanks—the

sight of this
So frightened our good friend, that
turning to me

And saying, 'It is over: let us go'—
There were our horses ready at the

doors—

We bade them no farewell, but mount-
ing these

He past for ever from his native land;
And I with him, my Julian, back to

mine.

TO ALFRED TENNYSON

MY GRANDSON.

GOLDEN-HAIR'D Ally whose name is one
with mine,

Crazy with laughter and babble and
earth's new wine,

Now that the flower of a year and a half is
thine,

O little blossom, O mine, and mine of mine,
Glorious poet who never hast written a

line,
Laugh, for the name at the head of my
verse is thine.

May'st thou never be wrong'd by the name
that is mine!

PREFATORY SONNET

TO THE 'NINETEENTH CENTURY.'

THOSE that of late had fled far and fast
 To touch all shores, now leaving to the skill
 Of others their old craft seaworthy still,
 Have charter'd this; where, mindful of the past,
 Our true co-mates regather round the mast;
 Of diverse tongue, but with a common will
 Here, in this roaring moon of daffodil
 And crocus, to put forth and brave the blast;
 For some, descending from the sacred peak
 Of hoar high-templed Faith, have leagued again
 Their lot with ours to rove the world about;
 And some are wilder comrades, sworn to seek
 If any golden harbor be for men
 In seas of Death and sunless gulfs of Doubt.

TO THE REV. W. H. BROOKFIELD.

BROOKS, for they call'd you so that knew you best,
 Old Brooks, who loved so well to mouth my rhymes,
 How oft we two have heard St. Mary's chimes!
 How oft the Cantab supper, host and guest,
 Would echo helpless laughter to your jest!
 How oft with him we paced that walk of limes,
 Him, the lost light of those dawn-golden times,
 Who loved you well! Now both are gone to rest.

You man of humorous-melancholy mark,
 Dead of some inward agony—is it so?
 Our kindlier, trustier Jaques, past away!
 I cannot laud this life, it looks so dark:
 Σκιάς ὄψαμ—dream of a shadow, go—
 God bless you. I shall join you in a day.

MONTENEGRO.

THEY rose to where their sovran eagle sails,
 They kept their faith, their freedom, on the height,
 Chaste, frugal, savage, arm'd by day and night
 Against the Turk; whose inroad nowhere scales
 Their headlong passes, but his foot-step fails,
 And red with blood the Crescent reels from fight
 Before their dauntless hundreds, in prone flight
 By thousands down the crags and thro' the vales.
 O smallest among peoples! rough rock-throne
 Of Freedom! warriors beating back the swarm
 Of Turkish Islam for five hundred years,
 Great Tsernogora! never since thine own
 Black ridges drew the cloud and brake the storm
 Has breathed a race of mightier mountaineers.

TO VICTOR HUGO.

VICTOR in Drama, Victor in Romance,
 Cloud-weaver of phantasmal hopes and fears,
 French of the French, and Lord of human tears;
 Child-lover; Bard whose fame-lit laurels glance

Darkening the wreaths of all that
would advance,
Beyond our strait, their claim to be
thy peers;
Weird Titan by thy winter weight of
years
As yet unbroken, Stormy voice of
France!
Who dost not love our England—so
they say;

I know not—England, France, all
man to be
Will make one people ere man's race
be run:
And I, desiring that diviner day,
Yield thee full thanks for thy full
courtesy
To younger England in the boy my
son.

TRANSLATIONS, ETC.

BATTLE OF BRUNANBURH.

CONSTANTINUS, King of the Scots, after having sworn allegiance to Athelstan, allied himself with the Danes of Ireland under Anlaf, and invading England, was defeated by Athelstan and his brother Edmund with great slaughter at Brunanburh in the year 937.

I.

¹ ATHELSTAN King,
Lord among Earls,
Bracelet-bestower and
Baron of Barons,
He with his brother,
Edmund Atheling,
Gaining a lifelong
Glory in battle,
Slew with the sword-edge
There by Brunanburh,
Brake the shield-wall,
Hew'd the lindenwood,²
Hack'd the battleshield,

Sons of Edward with hammer'd
brands.

II.

Theirs was a greatness
Got from their Grandsires—
Theirs that so often in

¹ I have more or less availed myself of my son's prose translation of this poem in the *Contemporary Review* (November 1876).

² Shields of lindenwood.

Strife with their enemies
Struck for their hoards and their
hearthstones and their homes.

III.

Bow'd the spoiler,
Bent the Scotsman,
Fell the shipcrews
Doom'd to the death.
All the field with blood of the fighters
Flow'd, from when first the
great
Sun-star of morningtide,
Lamp of the Lord God
Lord everlasting,
Glode over earth till the glorious
creature
Sank to his setting.

IV.

There lay many a man
Marr'd by the javelin,
Men of the Northland
Shot over shield.
There was the Scotsman
Weary of war.

V.

We the West-Saxons,
Long as the daylight
Lasted, in companies
Troubled the track of the host that
we hated,
Grimly with swords that were sharp
from the grindstone,
Fiercely we hack'd at the flyers before
us.

VI.

Mighty the Mercian,
Hard was his hand-play,
Sparing not any of
Those that with Anlaf,
Warriors over the
Weltering waters
Borne in the bark's-bosom,
Drew to this island:
Doom'd to the death.

VII.

Five young kings put asleep by the
sword-stroke,
Seven strong Earls of the army of
Anlaf
Fell on the war-field, numberless
numbers,
Shipmen and Scotsmen.

VIII.

Then the Norse leader,
Dire was his need of it,
Few were his following,
Fled to his warship:
Fleeted his vessel to sea with the
king in it,
Saving his life on the fallow flood.

IX.

Also the crafty one,
Constantinus,
Crept to his North again,
Hoar-headed hero!

X.

Slender warrant had
He to be proud of
The welcome of war-knives—
He that was reft of his
Folk and his friends that had
Fallen in conflict,
Leaving his son too
Lost in the carnage,
Mangled to morsels,
A youngster in war!

XI.

Slender reason had
He to be glad of

The clash of the war-glaive—
Traitor and trickster
And spurner of treaties—
He nor had Anlaf
With armies so broken
A reason for bragging
That they had the better
In perils of battle
On places of slaughter—
The struggle of standards,
The rush of the javelins,
The crash of the charges,¹
The wielding of weapons—
The play that they play'd with
The children of Edward.

XII.

Then with their nail'd prows
Parted the Norsemen, a
Blood-redden'd relic of
Javelins over
The jarring breaker, the
deep-sea billow,
Shaping their way toward
Dyflen² again,
Shamed in their souls.

XIII.

Also the brethren,
King and Atheling,
Each in his glory,
Went to his own in his own West-
Saxon-land,
Glad of the war.

XIV.

Many a carcase they left to be carrion,
Many a livid one, many a sallow-skin—
Left for the white-tail'd eagle to tear
it, and
Left for the horny-nibb'd raven to
rend it, and
Gave to the garbaging war-hawk to
gorge it, and
That gray beast, the wolf of the weald.

XV.

Never had huger
Slaughter of heroes

¹ Lit. 'the gathering of men.' ² Dublin.

Slain by the sword-edge—
Such as old writers
Have writ of in histories—
Hapt in this isle, since
Up from the East hither
Saxon and Angle from
Over the broad billow
Broke into Britain with
Haughty war-workers who
Harried the Welshman, when
Earls that were lured by the
Hunger of glory gat
Hold of the land.

ACHILLES OVER THE
TRENCH.

ILIAD, XVIII. 202.

So saying, light-foot Iris pass'd away.
Then rose Achilles dear to Zeus; and
round
The warrior's puissant shoulders
Pallas flung
Her fringed ægis, and around his
head
The glorious goddess wreath'd a
golden cloud,
And from it lighted an all-shining
flame.
As when a smoke from a city goes to
heaven
Far off from out an island girt by
foes,
All day the men contend in grievous
war
From their own city, but with set of
sun
Their fires flame thickly, and aloft the
glare
Flies streaming, if perchance the
neighbors round
May see, and sail to help them in the
war;
So from his head the splendor went
to heaven.
From wall to dyke he stept, he stood,
nor join'd
The Achæans—honoring his wise
mother's word—
There standing, shouted, and Pallas
far away

Call'd; and a boundless panic shook
the foe.
For like the clear voice when a trum-
pet shrills,
Blown by the fierce beleaguers of a
town,
So rang the clear voice of Æakidês;
And when the brazen cry of Æakidês
Was heard among the Trojans, all
their hearts
Were troubled, and the full-maned
horses whirl'd
The chariots backward, knowing
griefs at hand;
And sheer-astounded were the chariot-
eers
To see the dread, unweariable fire
That always o'er the great Pteleon's
head
Burn'd, for the bright-eyed goddess
made it burn.
Thrice from the dyke he sent his
mighty shout,
Thrice backward reel'd the Trojans
and allies;
And there and then twelve of their
noblest died
Among their spears and chariots.

TO PRINCESS FREDERICA ON
HER MARRIAGE.

O YOU that were eyes and light to
the King till he past away
From the darkness of life—
He saw not his daughter—he blest her:
the blind King sees you to-day,
He blesses the wife.

SIR JOHN FRANKLIN.

ON THE CENOTAPH IN WESTMINSTER
ABBEY.

NOT here! the white North has thy
bones; and thou,
Heroic sailor-soul,
Art passing on thine happier voyage
now
Toward no earthly pole.

TO DANTE.

(WRITTEN AT REQUEST OF THE FLORENTINES.)

KING, that hast reign'd six hundred
years, and grown
In power, and ever growest, since
thine own

Fair Florence honoring thy nativity,
Thy Florence now the crown of
Italy,
Hath sought the tribute of a verse
from me,
I, wearing but the garland of a day,
Cast at thy feet one flower that fades
away.

TIRESIAS

AND OTHER POEMS.

TO E. FITZGERALD.

OLD FITZ, who from your suburb
grange,

Where once I tarried for a while,
Glance at the wheeling Orb of change,
And greet it with a kindly smile;
Whom yet I see as there you sit
Beneath your sheltering garden-
tree,

And watch your doves about you flit,
And plant on shoulder, hand and
knee,

Or on your head their rosy feet,
As if they knew your diet spares
Whatever moved in that full sheet
Let down to Peter at his prayers;
Who live on milk and meal and
grass;

And once for ten long weeks I tried
Your table of Pythagoras,
And seem'd at first 'a thing en-
skied'

(As Shakespeare has it) airy-light
To float above the ways of men,
Then fell from that half-spiritual
height

Chill'd, till I tasted flesh again
One night when earth was winter-
black,

And all the heavens flash'd in
frost;

And on me, half-asleep, came back
That wholesome heat the blood
had lost,

And set me climbing icy capes
And glaciers, over which there
roll'd

To meet me long-arm'd vines with
grapes

Of Eshcol hugeness; for the cold
Without, and warmth within me,
wrought

To mould the dream; but none can
say

That Lenten fare makes Lenten
thought,

Who reads your golden Eastern
lay,

Than which I know no version done

In English more divinely well;

A planet equal to the sun

Which cast it, that large infidel

Your Omar; and your Omar drew

Full-handed plaudits from our best

In modern letters, and from two,

Old friends outvaluing all the rest,

Two voices heard on earth no more;

But we old friends are still alive,

And I am nearing seventy-four,

While you have touch'd at seventy-
five,

And so I send a birthday line

Of greeting; and my son, who dipt

In some forgotten book of mine

With sallow scraps of manuscript,

And dating many a year ago,

Has hit on this, which you will take

My Fitz, and welcome, as I know

Less for its own than for the sake

Of one recalling gracious times,
When, in our younger London
days,
You found some merit in my rhymes,
And I more pleasure in your
praise.

TIRESIAS.

I WISH I were as in the years of old,
While yet the blessed daylight made
itself

Ruddy thro' both the roofs of sight,
and woke

These eyes, now dull, but then so
keen to seek

The meanings ambush'd under all
they saw,

The flight of birds, the flame of sacri-
fice,

What omens may foreshadow fate to
man

And woman, and the secret of the
Gods.

My son, the Gods, despite of
human prayer,

Are slower to forgive than human
kings.

The great God, Arès, burns in anger
still

Against the guiltless heirs of him
from Tyre,

Our Cadmus, out of whom thou art,
who found

Beside the springs of Dircê, smote,
and still'd

Thro' all its folds the multitudinous
beast,

The dragon, which our trembling
fathers call'd

The God's own son.

A tale, that told to me,
When but thine age, by age as winter-
white

As mine is now, amazed, but made
me yearn

For larger glimpses of that more than
man

Which rolls the heavens, and lifts,
and lays the deep,

Yet loves and hates with mortal hates
and loves,

And moves unseen among the ways
of men.

Then, in my wanderings all the
lands that lie

Subjected to the Heliconian ridge
Have heard this footstep fall, altho'
my wont

Was more to scale the highest of the
heights

With some strange hope to see the
nearer God.

One naked peak—the sister of the
sun

Would climb from out the dark, and
linger there

To silver all the valleys with her
shafts—

There once, but long ago, five-fold
thy term

Of years, I lay; the winds were dead
for heat;

The noonday crag made the hand
burn; and sick

For shadow—not one bush was near
—I rose

Following a torrent till its myriad
falls

Found silence in the hollows under-
neath.

There in a secret olive-glade I saw
Pallas Athene climbing from the bath

In anger; yet one glittering foot dis-
turb'd

The lucid well; one snowy knee was
prest

Against the margin flowers; a dread-
ful light

Came from her golden hair, her golden
helm

And all her golden armor on the
grass,

And from her virgin breast, and virgin
eyes

Remaining fixt on mine, till mine grew
dark

For ever, and I heard a voice that
said

'Henceforth be blind, for thou hast
seen too much,

And speak the truth that no man may
believe.'

Son, in the hidden world of sight,
that lives

Behind this darkness, I behold her
still,
Beyond all work of those who carve
the stone,
Beyond all dreams of Godlike woman-
hood,
Ineffable beauty, out of whom, at a
glance,
And as it were, perforce, upon me
flash'd
The power of prophesying—but to me
No power—so chain'd and coupled
with the curse
Of blindness and their unbelief, who
heard
And heard not, when I spake of
famine, plague,
Shrine-shattering earthquake, fire,
flood, thunderbolt,
And angers of the Gods for evil done
And expiation lack'd—no power on
Fate,
Theirs, or mine own! for when the
crowd would roar
For blood, for war, whose issue was
their doom,
To cast wise words among the multi-
tude
Was flinging fruit to lions; nor, in
hours
Of civil outbreak, when I knew the
twain
Would each waste each, and bring on
both the yoke
Of stronger states, was mine the voice
to curb
The madness of our cities, and their
kings.

Who ever turn'd upon his heel to
hear

My warning that the tyranny of one
Was prelude to the tyranny of all?
My counsel that the tyranny of all
Led backward to the tyranny of one?

This power hath work'd no good to
aught that lives,
And these blind hands were useless
in their wars.

O therefore that the unfulfill'd desire,
The grief for ever born from griefs to
be,

The boundless yearning of the
Prophet's heart—

Could *that* stand forth, and like a
statue, rear'd
To some great citizen, win all praise
from all

Who past it, saying, 'That was he!'
In vain!

Virtue must shape itself in deed, and
those

Whom weakness or necessity have
cramp'd

Within themselves, immersing, each,
his urn

In his own well, draw solace as he
may.

Menceceus, thou hast eyes, and I
can hear

Too plainly what full tides of onset
sap

Our seven high gates, and what a
weight of war

Rides on those ringing axles! jingle
of bits,

Shouts, arrows, tramp of the horn-
footed horse

That grind the glebe to powder!
Stony showers

Of that ear-stunning hail of Arès
crash

Along the sounding walls. Above,
below,

Shock after shock, the song-built
towers and gates

Reel, bruised and butted with the
shuddering

War-thunder of iron rams; and from
within

The city comes a murmur void of
joy,

Lest she be taken captive—maidens,
wives,

And mothers with their babblers of
the dawn,

And oldest age in shadow from the
night,

Falling about their shrines before
their Gods,

And wailing 'Save us.'

And they wail to thee!
These eyeless eyes, that cannot see
thine own,

See this, that only in thy virtue lies
The saving of our Thebes; for, yes-
ter-night,

To me, the great God Arês, whose
 one bliss
 Is war, and human sacrifice—himself
 Blood-red from battle, spear and
 helmet tipt
 With stormy light as on a mast at
 sea,
 Stood out before a darkness, crying
 'Thebes,
 Thy Thebes shall fall and perish, for
 I loathe
 The seed of Cadmus—yet if one of
 these
 By his own hand—if one of these—'
 My son,
 No sound is breathed so potent to
 coerce,
 And to conciliate, as their names who
 dare
 For that sweet mother land which
 gave them birth
 Nobly to do, nobly to die. Their
 names,
 Graven on memorial columns, are a
 song
 Heard in the future; few, but more
 than wall
 And rampart, their examples reach a
 hand
 Far thro' all years, and everywhere
 they meet
 And kindle generous purpose, and the
 strength
 To mould it into action pure as
 theirs.
 Fairer thy fate than mine, if life's
 best end
 Be to end well! and thou refusing
 this,
 Unvenerable will thy memory be
 While men shall move the lips: but
 if thou dare—
 Thou, one of these, the race of Cad-
 mus—then
 No stone is fitted in yon marble
 girth
 Whose echo shall not tongue thy
 glorious doom,
 Nor in this pavement but shall ring
 thy name
 To every hoof that clangs it, and the
 springs
 Of Dirce laving yonder battle-plain,

Heard from the roofs by night, will
 murmur thee
 To thine own Thebes, while Thebes
 thro' thee shall stand
 Firm-based with all her Gods.
 The Dragon's cave
 Half hid, they tell me, now in flowing
 vines—
 Where once he dwelt and whence he
 roll'd himself
 At dead of night—thou knowest, and
 that smooth rock
 Before it, altar-fashion'd, where of
 late
 The woman-breasted Sphinx, with
 wings drawn back,
 Folded her lion paws, and look'd to
 Thebes.
 There blanch the bones of whom she
 slew, and these
 Mixt with her own, because the fierce
 beast found
 A wiser than herself, and dash'd her-
 self
 Dead in her rage: but thou art wise
 enough,
 Tho' young, to love thy wiser, blunt
 the curse
 Of Pallas, hear, and tho' I speak the
 truth
 Believe I speak it, let thine own hand
 strike
 Thy youthful pulses into rest and
 quench
 The red God's anger, fearing not to
 plunge
 Thy torch of life in darkness, rather—
 thou
 Rejoicing that the sun, the moon, the
 stars
 Send no such light upon the ways of
 men
 As one great deed.
 Thither, my son, and there
 Thou, that hast never known the
 embrace of love,
 Offer thy maiden life.
 This useless hand!
 I felt one warm tear fall upon it.
 Gone!
 He will achieve his greatness.
 But for me,
 I would that I were gather'd to my rest,

And mingled with the famous kings
 of old,
 On whom about their ocean-islets
 flash
 The faces of the Gods—the wise
 man's word,
 Here trampled by the populace under-
 foot,
 There crown'd with worship—and
 these eyes will find
 The men I knew, and watch the char-
 iot whirl
 About the goal again, and hunters
 race
 The shadowy lion, and the warrior-
 kings,
 In height and prowess more than hu-
 man, strive
 Again for glory, while the golden lyre
 Is ever sounding in heroic ears
 Heroic hymns, and every way the
 vales
 Wind, clouded with the grateful in-
 cense-fume
 Of those who mix all odor to the
 Gods
 On one far height in one far-shining
 fire.

—
 'One height and one far-shining fire'
 And while I fancied that my friend
 For this brief idyll would require
 A less diffuse and opulent end,
 And would defend his judgment well,
 If I should deem it over nice—
 The tolling of his funeral bell
 Broke on my Pagan Paradise,
 And mixt the dream of classic times
 And all the phantoms of the
 dream,
 With present grief, and made the
 rhymes,
 That miss'd his living welcome,
 seem
 Like would-be guests an hour too late,
 Who down the highway moving on
 With easy laughter, find the gate
 Is bolted, and the master gone.
 Gone into darkness, that full light
 Of friendship! past, in sleep, away
 By night, into the deeper night!

The deeper night? A clearer day
 Than our poor twilight dawn on
 earth—
 If night, what barren toil to be!
 What life, so main'd by night, were
 worth
 Our living out? Not mine to me
 Remembering all the golden hours
 Now silent, and so many dead,
 And him the last; and laying flowers,
 This wreath, above his honor'd head
 And praying that, when I from hence,
 Shall fade with him into the un-
 known,
 My close of earth's experience
 May prove as peaceful as his own.

THE WRECK.

I.

HIDE me, Mother! my Fathers be-
 long'd to the church of old,
 I am driven by storm and sin and
 death to the ancient fold,
 I cling to the Catholic Cross once
 more, to the Faith that saves,
 My brain is full of the crash of
 wrecks, and the roar of waves,
 My life itself is a wreck, I have sul-
 lied a noble name,
 I am flung from the rushing tide of
 the world as a waif of shame,
 I am roused by the wail of a child,
 and awake to a livid light,
 And a ghastlier face than ever has
 haunted a grave by night,
 I would hide from the storm without,
 I would flee from the storm
 within,
 I would make my life one prayer for
 a soul that died in his sin,
 I was the tempter, Mother, and mine
 was the deeper fall;
 I will sit at your feet, I will hide my
 face, I will tell you all.

II.

He that they gave me to, Mother, a
 heedless and innocent bride—
 I never have wrong'd his heart, I
 have only wounded his pride—

Spain in his blood and the Jew—
dark-visaged, stately and tall—
A princelier-looking man 'never stept
thro' a Prince's hall.

And who, when his anger was kindled,
would venture to give him the nay?

And a man men fear is a man to be
loved by the women they say.

And I could have loved him too, if
the blossom can doat on the blight,

Or the young green leaf rejoice in the
frost that sears it at night;

He would open the books that I
prized, and toss them away
with a yawn,

Repell'd by the magnet of Art to the
which my nature was drawn,

The word of the Poet by whom the
deeps of the world are stirr'd,

The music that robes it in language
beneath and beyond the word!

My Shelley would fall from my hands
when he cast a contemptuous
glance

From where he was poring over his
Tables of Trade and Finance;

My hands, when I heard him coming,
would drop from the chords or
the keys,

But ever I fail'd to please him, how-
ever I strove to please—

All day long far-off in the cloud of the
city, and there

Lost, head and heart, in the chances
of dividend, consol, and share—

And at home if I sought for a kindly
caress, being woman and weak,

His formal kiss fell chill as a flake of
snow on the cheek:

And so, when I bore him a girl, when
I held it aloft in my joy,

He look'd at it coldly, and said to me
'Pity it isn't a boy.'

The one thing given me, to love and
to live for, glanced at in scorn!

The child that I felt I could die for—
as if she were basely born!

I had lived a wild-flower life, I was
planted now in a tomb,

The daisy will shut to the shadow, I
closed my heart to the gloom;

I threw myself all abroad—I would
play my part with the young
By the low foot-lights of the world—
and I caught the wreath that
was flung.

III.

Mother, I have not—however their
tongues may have babbled of
me—

Sinn'd thro' an animal vileness, for all
but a dwarf was he,

And all but a hunchback too; and I
look'd at him, first, askance,

With pity—not he the knight for an
amorous girl's romance!

Tho' wealthy enough to have bask'd
in the light of a dowerless
smile,

Having lands at home and abroad in
a rich West-Indian isle;

But I came on him once at a ball, the
heart of a listening crowd—

Why, what a brow was there! he was
seated—speaking aloud

To women, the flower of the time,
and men at the helm of state—

Flowing with easy greatness and
touching on all things great,

Science, philosophy, song—till I felt
myself ready to weep

For I knew not what, when I heard
that voice,—as mellow and
deep

As a psalm by a mighty master and
peal'd from an organ,—roll

Rising and falling—for, Mother, the
voice was the voice of the
soul;

And the sun of the soul made day in
the dark of his wonderful eyes.

Here was the hand that would help
me, would heal me—the heart
that was wise!

And he, poor man, when he learnt
that I hated the ring I wore,

He helpt me with death, and he heal'd
me with sorrow for evermore.

IV.

For I broke the bond. That day my
nurse had brought me the child.

The small sweet face was flush'd, but
it coo'd to the Mother and
smiled.
'Anything ailing,' I ask'd her, 'with
baby?' She shook her head,
And the Motherless Mother kiss'd it,
and turn'd in her haste and
fled.

V.

Low warm winds had gently breathed
us away from the land—
Ten long sweet summer days upon
deck, sitting hand in hand—
When he clothed a naked mind with
the wisdom and wealth of his
own,
And I bow'd myself down as a slave
to his intellectual throne.
When he coin'd into English gold
some treasure of classical song,
When he flouted a statesman's error,
or flamed at a public wrong,
When he rose as it were on the wings
of an eagle beyond me, and
past
Over the range and the change of the
world from the first to the
last,
When he spoke of his tropical home
in the canes by the purple
tide,
And the high star-crowns of his
palms on the deep-wooded
mountain side,
And cliffs all robed in lianas that
dropt to the brink of his bay,
And trees like the towers of a minis-
ter, the sons of a winterless
day.
'Paradise there!' so he said, but I
seem'd in Paradise then
With the first great love I had felt for
the first and greatest of men;
Ten long days of summer and sin—if
it must be so—
But days of a larger light than I ever
again shall know—
Days that will glimmer, I fear, thro'
life to my latest breath;
'No frost there,' so he said, 'as in
truest Love no Death.'

VI.

Mother, one morning a bird with a
warble plaintively sweet
Perch'd on the shrouds, and then fell
fluttering down at my feet;
I took it, he made it a cage, we fon-
dled it, Stephen and I,
But it died, and I thought of the
child for a moment, I scarce
know why.

VII.

But if sin be sin, not inherited fate, as
many will say,
My sin to my desolate little one found
me at sea on a day,
When her orphan wail came borne in
the shriek of a growing wind,
And a voice rang out in the thunders
of Ocean and Heaven 'Thou
hast sinn'd.'
And down in the cabin were we, for
the towering crest of the tides
Plunged on the vessel and swept in a
cataract off from her sides,
And ever the great storm grew with a
howl and a hoot of the blast
In the rigging, voices of hell—then
came the crash of the mast.
'The wages of sin is death,' and there
I began to weep,
'I am the Jonah, the crew should
cast me into the deep.
For ah God, what a heart was mine to
forsake her even for you.'
'Never the heart among women,' he
said, 'more tender and true.'
'The heart! not a mother's heart,
when I left my darling alone.'
'Comfort yourself, for the heart of the
father will care for his own.'
'The heart of the father will spurn
her,' I cried, 'for the sin of the
wife,
The cloud of the mother's shame will
enfold her and darken her life.'
Then his pale face twitch'd; 'O Ste-
phen, I love you, I love you,
and yet'—
As I lean'd away from his arms—
'would God, we had never
met!'

And he spoke not—only the storm ;
till after a little, I yearn'd
For his voice again, and he call'd to
me ' Kiss me ! ' and there—as
I turn'd—
' The heart, the heart ! ' I kiss'd him,
I clung to the sinking form,
And the storm went roaring above us,
and he—was out of the storm.

VIII.

And then, then, Mother, the ship
stagger'd under a thunderous
shock,
That shook us asunder, as if she had
struck and crash'd on a rock ;
For a huge sea smote every soul from
the decks of The Falcon but
one ;
All of them, all but the man that was
lash'd to the helm had gone ;
And I fell—and the storm and the
days went by, but I knew no
more—
Lost myself—lay like the dead by the
dead on the cabin floor,
Dead to the death beside me, and lost
to the loss that was mine,
With a dim dream, now and then, of
a hand giving bread and wine,
Till I woke from the trance, and the
ship stood still, and the skies
were blue,
But the face I had known, O Mother,
was not the face that I knew.

IX.

The strange misfeaturing mask that I
saw so amazed me, that I
Stumbled on deck, half mad. I
would fling myself over and
die !
But one—he was waving a flag—the
one man left on the wreck—
' Woman '—he graspt at my arm—
' stay there '—I crouch'd upon
deck—
' We are sinking, and yet there's
hope : look yonder, ' he cried,
' a sail ' !
In a tone so rough that I broke into
passionate tears, and the wail

Of a beaten babe, till I saw that a
boat was nearing us—then
All on a sudden I thought, I shall
look on the child again.

X.

They lower'd me down the side, and
there in the boat I lay
With sad eyes fixt on the lost sea-
home, as we glided away,
And I sigh'd, as the low dark hull
dipt under the smiling main,
' Had I stay'd with him, I had now—
with him—been out of my pain.'

XI.

They took us aboard : the crew were
gentle, the captain kind ;
But I was the lonely slave of an of-
ten-wandering mind ;
For whenever a rougher gust might
tumble a stormier wave,
' O Stephen, ' I moan'd, ' I am coming
to thee in thine Ocean-grave.'
And again, when a balmier breeze
curl'd over a peacefuller sea,
I found myself moaning again ' O
child, I am coming to thee.'

XII.

The broad white brow of the Isle—
that bay with the color'd sand—
Rich was the rose of sunset there, as
we drew to the land ;
All so quiet the ripple would hardly
blanch into spray
At the feet of the cliff ; and I pray'd
—' my child '—for I still could
pray—
' May her life be as blissfully calm, be
never gloom'd by the curse
Of a sin, not hers !'
Was it well with the child ?
I wrote to the nurse
Who had borne my flower on her
hiringling heart ; and an answer
came
Not from the nurse—nor yet to the
wife—to her maiden name !
I shook as I open'd the letter—I knew
that hand too well—

And from it a scrap, clipt out of the
 'deaths' in a paper, fell.
 'Ten long sweet summer days' of
 fever, and want of care!
 And gone—that day of the storm—
 O Mother, she came to me
 there.

DESPAIR.

A MAN and his wife having lost faith in a
 God, and hope of a life to come, and being
 utterly miserable in this, resolve to end
 themselves by drowning. The woman is
 drowned, but the man rescued by a minis-
 ter of the sect he had abandoned.

I.

Is it you, that preach'd in the chapel
 there looking over the sand?
 Follow'd us too that night, and
 dogg'd us, and drew me to
 land?

II.

What did I feel that night? You are
 curious. How should I tell?
 Does it matter so much what I felt?
 You rescued me—yet—was it
 well
 That you came unwish'd for, uncall'd,
 between me and the deep and
 my doom,
 Three days since, three more dark
 days of the Godless gloom
 Of a life without sun, without health,
 without hope, without any
 delight
 In anything here upon earth? but 'ah
 God, that night, that night
 When the rolling eyes of the light-
 house there on the fatal neck
 Of land running out into rock—they
 had saved many hundreds from
 wreck—
 Glared on our way toward death, I
 remember I thought, as we
 past,
 Does it matter how many they saved?
 we are all of us wreck'd at
 last—

'Do you fear?' and there came thro'
 the roar of the breaker a
 whisper, a breath,
 'Fear? am I not with you? I am
 frighted at life not death.'

III.

And the suns of the limitless Universe
 sparkled and shone in the
 sky,
 Flashing with fires as of God, but we
 knew that their light was a
 lie—
 Bright as with deathless hope—but,
 however they sparkled and
 shone,
 The dark little worlds running round
 them were worlds of woe like
 our own—
 No soul in the heaven above, no soul
 on the earth below,
 A fiery scroll written over with lamen-
 tation and woe.

IV.

See, we were nursed in the drear
 nightfold of your fatalist creed,
 And we turn'd to the growing dawn,
 we had hoped for a dawn
 indeed,
 When the light of a Sun that was
 coming would scatter the
 ghosts of the Past,
 And the cramping creeds that had
 madden'd the peoples would
 vanish at last,
 And we broke away from the Christ,
 our human brother and friend,
 For He spoke, or it seem'd that He
 spoke, of a Hell without help,
 without end.

V.

Hoped for a dawn and it came, but
 the promise had faded away;
 We had past from a cheerless night
 to the glare of a drearier day;
 He is only a cloud and a smoke who
 was once a pillar of fire,
 The guess of a worm in the dust and
 the shadow of its desire—

Of a worm as it writhes in a world of
the weak trodden down by the
strong,
Of a dying worm in a world, all
massacre, murder, and wrong.

VI.

O we poor orphans of nothing—alone
on that lonely shore—
Born of the brainless Nature who
knew not that which she bore !
Trusting no longer that earthly flower
would be heavenly fruit—
Come from the brute, poor souls—no
souls—and to die with the
brute—

VII.

Nay, but I am not claiming your
pity: I know you of old—
Small pity for those that have ranged
from the narrow warmth of
your fold,
Where you bawl'd the dark side of
your faith and a God of eternal
rage,
Till you flung us back on ourselves, and
the human heart, and the Age.

VIII.

But pity—the Pagan held it a vice—
was in her and in me,
Helpless, taking the place of the pity-
ing God that should be !
'Pity for all that aches in the grasp of
an idiot power,
And pity for our own selves on an
earth that bore not a flower ;
Pity for all that suffers on land or in
air or the deep,
And pity for our own selves till we
long'd for eternal sleep.

IX.

'Lightly step over the sands! the
waters—you hear them call!
Life with its anguish, and horrors,
and errors—away with it all !'
And she laid her hand in my own—
she was always loyal and
sweet—

Till the points of the foam in the dusk
came playing about our feet.

There was a strong sea-current would
sweep us out to the main.

'Ah God' tho' I felt as I spoke I was
taking the name in vain—

'Ah God' and we turn'd to each
other, we kiss'd, we embraced,
she and I,

Knowing the Love we were used to
believe everlasting would die:

We had read their know-nothing
books and we lean'd to the
darker side—

Ah God, should we find Him, per-
haps, perhaps, if we died, if we
died;

We never had found Him on earth,
this earth is a fatherless Hell—

'Dear Love, for ever and ever, for
ever and ever farewell,'

Never a cry so desolate, not since the
world began,

Never a kiss so sad, no, not since the
coming of man !

X.

But the blind wave cast me ashore, and
you saved me, a valueless life.

Not a grain of gratitude mine! You
have parted the man from the
wife.

I am left alone on the land, she is all
alone in the sea ;

If a curse meant ought, I would curse
you for not having let me be.

XI.

Visions of youth—for my brain was
drunk with the water, it seems ;

I had past into perfect quiet at length
out of pleasant dreams,

And the transient trouble of drowning
—what was it when match'd
with the pains

Of the hellish heat of a wretched life
rushing back thro' the veins?

XII.

Why should I live? one son had
forged on his father and fled,

And if I believed in a God, I would
thank him, the other is dead,
And there was a baby-girl, that had
never look'd on the light:
Happiest she of us all, for she past
from the night to the night.

XIII.

But the crime, if a crime, of her eldest-
born, her glory, her boast,
Struck hard at the tender heart of the
mother, and broke it almost;
Tho', glory and shame dying out for
ever in endless time,
Does it matter so much whether
crown'd for a virtue, or hang'd
for a crime?

XIV.

And ruin'd by *him*, by *him*, I stood
there, naked, amazed
In a world of arrogant opulence,
fear'd myself turning crazed,
And I would not be mock'd in a mad-
house! and she, the delicate
wife,
With a grief that could only be cured,
if cured, by the surgeon's
knife,—

XV.

Why should we bear with an hour of
torture, a moment of pain,
If every man die for ever, if all his
griefs are in vain,
And the homeless planet at length
will be wheel'd thro' the silence
of space,
Motherless evermore of an ever-
vanishing race,
When the worm shall have writhed
its last, and its last brother-
worm will have fled
From the dead fossil skull that is left
in the rocks of an earth that
is dead?

XVI.

Have I crazed myself over their horri-
ble infidel writings? O yes,
For these are the new dark ages, you
see, of the popular press,

When the bat comes out of his cave,
and the owls are whooping at
noon,

And Doubt is the lord of this dung-
hill and crows to the sun and
the moon,

Till the Sun and the Moon of our
science are both of them turn'd
into blood,

And Hope will have broken her
heart, running after a shadow
of good;

For their knowing and know-nothing
books are scatter'd from hand
to hand—

We have knelt in your know-all
chapel too looking over the
sand.

XVII.

What! I should call on that Infinite
Love that has served us so
well?

Infinite cruelty rather that made ever-
lasting Hell,

Made us, foreknew us, foredoom'd us,
and does what he will with his
own;

Better our dead brute mother who
never has heard us groan!

XVIII.

Hell? if the souls of men were im-
mortal, as men have been told,
The lecher would cleave to his lusts,
and the miser would yearn for
his gold,

And so there were Hell for ever! but
were there a God as you say,

His Love would have power over Hell
till it utterly vanish'd away.

XIX.

Ah yet—I have had some glimmer, at
times, in my gloomiest woe,
Of a God behind all—after all—the
great God for aught that I
know;

But the God of Love and of Hell
together—they cannot be
thought,

If there be such a God, may the
Great God curse him and bring
him to nought!

XX.

Blasphemy! whose is the fault? is it
mine? for why would you save
A madman to vex you with wretched
words, who is best in his grave?
Blasphemy! ay, why not, being damn'd
beyond hope of grace?
O would I were yonder with her, and
away from your faith and your
face!
Blasphemy! true! I have scared you
pale with my scandalous talk,
But the blasphemy to *my* mind lies all
in the way that you walk.

XXI.

Hence! she is gone! can I stay? can
I breathe divorced from the
Past?
You needs must have good lynx-eyes
if I do not escape you at last.
Our orthodox coroner doubtless will
find it a felo-de-se,
And the stake and the cross-road,
fool, if you will, does it matter
to me?

THE ANCIENT SAGE.

A THOUSAND summers ere the time
of Christ
From out his ancient city came a Seer
Whom one that loved, and honor'd
him, and yet
Was no disciple, richly garb'd, but
worn
From wasteful living, follow'd—in
his hand
A scroll of verse—till that old man
before
A cavern whence an affluent fountain
pour'd
From darkness into daylight, turn'd
and spoke.

This wealth of waters might but seem
to draw

From yon dark cave, but, son, the
source is higher,
Von summit half-a-league in air—and
higher,
The cloud that hides it—higher still,
the heavens
Whereby the cloud was moulded, and
whereout
The cloud descended. Force is from
the heights.
I am wearied of our city, son, and go
To spend my one last year among the
hills.
What hast thou there? Some death-
song for the Ghouls
To make their banquet relish? let me
read.

"How far thro' all the bloom and
brake
That nightingale is heard!
What power but the bird's could make
This music in the bird?
How summer-bright are yonder skies,
And earth as fair in hue!
And yet what sign of aught that lies
Behind the green and blue?
But man to-day is fancy's fool
As man hath ever been.
The nameless Power, or Powers, that
rule
Were never heard or seen."

If thou would'st hear the Nameless,
and wilt dive
Into the Temple-cave of thine own
self,
There, brooding by the central altar,
thou
May'st haply learn the Nameless hath
a voice,
By which thou wilt abide, if thou be
wise,
As if thou knewest, tho' thou canst
not know;
For Knowledge is the swallow on the
lake
That sees and stirs the surface-
shadow there
But never yet hath dipt into the
abysm,
The Abysm of all Abysms, beneath,
within

The blue of sky and sea, the green of earth,
 And in the million-millionth of a grain
 Which cleft and cleft again for evermore,
 And ever vanishing, never vanishes,
 To me, my son, more mystic than myself,
 Or even than the Nameless is to me.
 And when thou sendest thy free soul thro' heaven,
 Nor understandest bound nor boundlessness,
 Thou seest the Nameless of the hundred names.
 And if the Nameless should withdraw from all
 Thy frailty counts most real, all thy world
 Might vanish like thy shadow in the dark.

"And since—from when this earth began—

The Nameless never came
 Among us, never spake with man,
 And never named the Name"—

Thou canst not prove the Nameless,
 O my son,
 Nor canst thou prove the world thou movest in,
 Thou canst not prove that thou art body alone,
 Nor canst thou prove that thou art spirit alone,
 Nor canst thou prove that thou art both in one:
 Thou canst not prove thou art immortal, no
 Nor yet that thou art mortal—nay my son,
 Thou canst not prove that I, who speak with thee,
 Am not thyself in converse with thyself,
 For nothing worthy proving can be proven,
 Nor yet disproven: wherefore thou be wise,
 Cleave ever to the sunnier side of doubt,

And cling to Faith beyond the forms of Faith!

She reels not in the storm of warring words,

She brightens at the clash of 'Yes' and 'No,'

She sees the Best that glimmers thro' the Worst,

She feels the Sun is hid but for a night,

She spies the summer thro' the winter bud,

She tastes the fruit before the blossom falls,

(She hears the lark within the songless egg,

She finds the fountain where they wail'd 'Mirage'!

"What Power? aught akin to mind,
 The mind in me and you?

Or power as of the Gods gone blind

Who see not what they do?"

But some in yonder city hold, my son,
 That none but Gods could build this house of ours,

So beautiful, vast, various, so beyond
 All work of man, yet, like all work of man,

A beauty with defect—till That which knows,

And is not known, but felt thro' what we feel

Within ourselves is highest, shall descend

On this half-deed, and shape it at the last

According to the Highest in the Highest.

"What Power but the Years that make

And break the vase of clay,
 And stir the sleeping earth, and wake

The bloom that fades away?
 What rulers but the Days and Hours

That cancel weal with woe,
 And wind the front of youth with

flowers,
 And cap our age with snow?"

The days and hours are ever glancing by,
And seem to flicker past thro' sun and shade,
Or short, or long, as Pleasure leads, or Pain;
But with the Nameless is nor Day nor Hour;
Tho' we, thin minds, who creep from thought to thought,
Break into 'Thens' and 'Whens' the Eternal Now:
This double seeming of the single world!—
My words are like the babblings in a dream
Of nightmare, when the babblings break the dream.
But thou be wise in this dream-world of ours,
Nor take thy dial for thy deity.
But make the passing shadow serve thy will.

"The years that made the stripling wise
Undo their work again,
And leave him, blind of heart and eyes,
The last and least of men;
Who clings to earth, and once would dare
Hell-heat or Arctic cold,
And now one breath of cooler air
Would loose him from his hold;
His winter chills him to the root,
He withers marrow and mind;
The kernel of the shrivell'd fruit
Is jutting thro' the rind;
The tiger spasms tear his chest,
The palsy wags his head;
The wife, the sons, who love him best
Would fain that he were dead;
The griefs by which he once was wrung
Were never worth the while"—

Who knows? or whether this earth-narrow life
Be yet but yolk, and forming in the shell?

"The shaft of scorn that once had stung
But wakes a dotard smile."

The placid gleam of sunset after storm!

"The statesman's brain that sway'd the past
Is feebler than his knees;
The passive sailor wrecks at last
In ever-silent seas;
The warrior hath forgot his arms,
The Learned all his lore;
The changing market frets or charms
The merchant's hope no more;
The prophet's beacon burn'd in vain,
And now is lost in cloud;
The plowman passes, bent with pain,
To mix with what he plow'd;
The poet whom his Age would quote
As heir of endless fame—
He knows not ev'n the book he wrote,
Not even his own name.
For man has overlied his day,
And, darkening in the light,
Scarce feels the senses break away
To mix with ancient Night."

The shell must break before the bird can fly.

"The years that when my Youth began
Had set the lily and rose
By all my ways where'er they ran,
Have ended mortal foes;
My rose of love for ever gone,
My lily of truth and trust—
They made her lily and rose in one,
And changed her into dust.
O rosetree planted in my grief,
And growing, on her tomb,
Her dust is greening in your leaf,
Her blood is in your bloom.
O slender lily waving there,
And laughing back the light,
In vain you tell me 'Earth is fair'
When all is dark as night."

My son, the world is dark with griefs and graves,
So dark that men cry out against the Heavens.
Who knows but that the darkness is in man?
The doors of Night may be the gates of Light;

For wert thou born or blind or deaf,
 and then
 Suddenly heal'd, how would'st thou
 glory in all
 The splendors and the voices of the
 world!
 And we, the poor earth's dying race,
 and yet
 No phantoms, watching from a phan-
 tom shore
 Await the last and largest sense to
 make
 The phantom walls of this illusion
 fade,
 And show us that the world is wholly
 fair.

"But vain the tears for darken'd
 years
 As laughter over wine,
 And vain the laughter as the tears,
 O brother, mine or thine,

For all that laugh, and all that
 weep
 And all that breathe are one
 Slight ripple on the boundless deep
 That moves, and all is gone."

But that one ripple, on the boundless
 deep
 Feels that the deep is boundless, and
 itself
 For ever changing form, but evermore
 One with the boundless motion of the
 deep.

"Yet wine and laughter friends!
 and set
 The lamps alight, and call
 For golden music, and forget
 The darkness of the pall."

If utter darkness closed the day,
 my son—
 But earth's dark forehead flings
 athwart the heavens
 Her shadow crown'd with stars—and
 yonder—out—
 To northward—some that never set,
 but pass
 From sight and night to lose them-
 selves in day.

I hate the black negation of the bier,
 And wish the dead, as happier than
 ourselves
 And higher, having climb'd one step
 beyond
 Our village miseries, might be borne
 in white
 To burial or to burning, hymn'd from
 hence
 With songs in praise of death, and
 crown'd with flowers!

"O worms and maggots of to-day
 Without their hope of wings!"

But louder than thy rhyme the silent
 Word
 Of that world-prophet in the heart of
 man.

"Tho' some have gleams or so they
 say
 Of more than mortal things."

To-day? but what of yesterday? for oft
 On me, when boy, there came what
 then I call'd,
 Who knew no books and no philoso-
 phies,
 In my boy-phrase 'The Passion of the
 Past.'
 The first gray streak of earliest sum-
 mer-dawn,
 The last long stripe of waning crimson
 gloom,
 As if the late and early were but one—
 A height, a broken grange, a grove, a
 flower
 Had murmurs 'Lost and gone and
 lost and gone!'
 A breath, a whisper—some divine
 farewell—
 Desolate sweetness—far and far
 away—
 What had he loved, what had he lost,
 the boy?
 I know not and I speak of what has
 been.
 And more, my son! for more than
 once when I
 Sat all alone, revolving in myself,
 The word that is the symbol of my-
 self,

The mortal limit of the Self was
loosed,
And past into the Nameless, as a
cloud
Melts into Heaven. I touch'd my
limbs, the limbs
Were strange not mine—and yet no
shade of doubt,
But utter clearness, and thro' loss of
Self
The gain of such large life as match'd
with ours
Were Sun to spark—onshadowable
in words,
Themselves but shadows of a shadow-
world

“And idle gleams will come and go,
But still the clouds remain;”

The clouds themselves are children of
the Sun.

“And Night and Shadow rule
below
When only Day should reign.”

And Day and Night are children of
the Sun,
And idle gleams to thee are light to
me.

Some say, the Light was father of the
Night,

And some, the Night was father of the
Light,

No night no day!—I touch thy world
again—

No ill no good! such counter-terms,
my son,

Are border-races, holding, each its
own

By endless war: but night enough is
there

In yon dark city: get thee back: and
since

The key to that weird casket, which
for thee

But holds a skull, is neither thine nor
mine,

But in the hand of what is more than
man,

Or in man's hand when man is more
than man,

Let be thy wail and help thy fellow
men,

And make thy gold thy vassal not thy
king,

And fling free alms into the beggar's
bowl,

And send the day into the darken'd
heart;

Nor list for guerdon in the voice of
men,

A dying echo from a fallen wall;

Nor care—for Hunger hath the Evil
eye—

To vex the noon with fiery gems, or
fold

Thy presence in the silk of sumptuous
looms;

Nor roll thy viands on a luscious
tongue,

Nor drown thyself with flies in honied
wine;

Nor thou be rageful, like a handled
bee,

And lose thy life by usage of thy
sting;

Nor harm an adder thro' the lust for
harm,

Nor make a snail's horn shrink for
wantonness;

And more—think well! Do-well will
follow thought,

And in the fatal sequence of this world
An evil thought may soil thy child-
ren's blood;

But curb the beast would cast thee in
the mire,

And leave the hot swamp of voluptu-
ousness

A cloud between the Nameless and
thyself,

And lay thine uphill shoulder to the
wheel,

And climb the Mount of Blessing,
whence, if thou

Look higher, then—perchance—thou
mayest—beyond

A hundred ever-rising mountain lines,
And past the range of Night and

Shadow—see

The high-heaven dawn of more than
mortal day

Strike on the Mount of Vision!

So, farewell.

THE FLIGHT.

I.

ARE you sleeping? have you forgotten?
do not sleep, my sister dear!
How *can* you sleep? the morning
brings the day I hate and fear;
The cock has crow'd already once,
he crows before his time;
Awake! the creeping glimmer steals,
the hills are white with rime.

II.

Ah, clasp me in your arms, sister, ah,
fold me to your breast!
Ah, let me weep my fill once more,
and cry myself to rest!
To rest? to rest and wake no more
were better rest for me,
Than to waken every morning to that
face I loathe to see:

III.

I envied your sweet slumber, all
night so calm you lay,
The night was calm, the morn is
calm, and like another day;
But I could wish yon moaning sea
would rise and burst the shore,
And such a whirlwind blow these
woods, as never blew before.

IV.

For, one by one, the stars went down
across the gleaming pane.
And project after project rose, and all
of them were vain;
The blackthorn-blossom fades and
falls and leaves the bitter sloe,
The hope I catch at vanishes and
youth is turn'd to woe.

V.

Come, speak a little comfort! all
night I pray'd with tears,
And yet no comfort came to me, and
now the morn appears,
When he will tear me from your side,
who bought me for his slave:
This father pays his debt with me, and
weds me to my grave.

VI.

What father, this or mine, was he,
who, on that summer day
When I had fall'n from off the crag
we clamber'd up in play,
Found, fear'd me dead, and groan'd,
and took and kiss'd me, and
again
He kiss'd me; and I loved him then;
he *was* my father then.

VII.

No father now, the tyrant vassal of a
tyrant vice!
The Godless Jephtha vows his child
... to one cast of the dice.
These ancient woods, this Hall at last
will go—perhaps have gone,
Except his own meek daughter yield
her life, heart, soul to one—

VIII.

To one who knows I scorn him. O
the formal mocking bow,
The cruel smile, the courtly phrase
that masks his malice now—
But often in the sidelong eyes a gleam
of all things ill—
It is not Love but Hate that weds a
bride against her will;

IX.

Hate, that would pluck from this true
breast the locket that I wear,
The precious crystal into which I
braided Edwin's hair!
The love that keeps this heart alive
beats on it night and day—
One golden curl, his golden gift, before
he past away.

X.

He left us weeping in the woods; his
boat was on the sand;
How slowly down the rocks he went,
how loth to quit the land!
And all my life was darken'd, as I saw
the white sail run,
And darken, up that lane of light into
the setting sun.

XI.

How often have we watch'd the sun
fade from us thro' the West,
And follow Edwin to those isles, those
islands of the Bliest!
Is *he* not there? would I were there,
the friend, the bride, the wife,
With him, where summer never dies,
with Love, the Sun of Life!

XII.

O would I were in Edwin's arms—
once more—to feel his breath
Upon my cheek—on Edwin's ship,
with Edwin, ev'n in death,
Tho' all about the shuddering wreck
the death-white sea should rave,
Or if lip were laid to lip on the pillows
of the wave.

XIII.

Shall I take *him*? I kneel with *him*?
I swear and swear forsworn
To love him most, whom most I
loathe, to honor whom I scorn?
The Fiend would yell, the grave
would yawn, my mother's ghost
would rise—
To lie, to lie—in God's own house—
the blackest of all lies!

XIV.

Why—rather than that hand in mine,
tho' every pulse would freeze
I'd sooner fold an icy corpse dead of
some foul disease:
Wed him? I will not wed him, let
them spurn me from the doors,
And I will wander till I die about the
barren moors.

XV.

The dear, mad bride who stabb'd her
bridegroom on her bridal
night—
If mad, then I am mad, but sane, if
she were in the right.
My father's madness makes me mad—
but words are only words!
I am not mad, not yet, not quite—
There! listen how the birds

XVI.

Begin to warble yonder in the budding
orchard trees!
The lark has past from earth to
Heaven upon the morning
breeze!
How gladly, were I one of those, how
early would I wake!
And yet the sorrow that I bear is
sorrow for *his* sake.

XVII.

They love their mates, to whom they
sing; or else their songs, that
meet
The morning with such music, would
never be so sweet!
And tho' these fathers will not hear,
the blessed Heavens are just,
And Love is fire, and burns the feet
would trample it to dust.

XVIII.

A door was open'd in the house—
who? who? my father sleeps!
A stealthy foot upon the stair! he—
some one—this way creeps!
If he? yes, he . . . lurks, listens, fears
his victim may have fled—
He! where is some sharp-pointed
thing? he comes, and finds me
dead.

XIX.

Not he, not yet! and time to act—but
how my temples burn!
And idle fancies flutter me, I know
not where to turn;
Speak to me, sister; counsel me; this
marriage must not be.
You only know the love that makes
the world a world to me!

XX.

Our gentle mother, had *she* lived—but
we were left alone:
That other left us to ourselves; he
cared not for his own;
So all the summer long we roam'd in
these wild woods of ours,
My Edwin loved to call us then 'His
two wild woodland flowers.'

XXI.

Wild flowers blowing side by side in
 God's free light and air,
 Wild flowers of the secret woods, when
 Edwin found us there,
 Wild woods in which we roved with
 him, and heard his passionate
 vow,
 Wild woods in which we rove no
 more, if we be parted now!

XXII.

You will not leave me thus in grief to
 wander forth forlorn;
 We never changed a bitter word, not
 once since we were born;
 Our dying mother join'd our hands;
 she knew this father well;
 She bad us love, like souls in Heaven,
 and now I fly from Hell,

XXIII.

And you with me; and we shall light
 upon some lonely shore,
 Some lodge within the waste sea-
 dunes, and hear the waters roar,
 And see the ships from out the West
 go dipping thro' the foam,
 And sunshine on that sail at last which
 brings our Edwin home.

XXIV.

But look, the morning grows apace,
 and lights the old church-tower,
 And lights the clock! the hand points
 five—O me—it strikes the
 hour—
 I bide no more, I meet my fate, what-
 ever ills betide!
 Arise, my own true sister, come forth!
 the world is wide.

XXV.

And yet my heart is ill at ease, my
 eyes are dim with dew,
 I seem to see a new-dug grave up
 yonder by the yew!
 If we should never more return, but
 wander hand in hand
 With breaking hearts, without a friend,
 and in a distant land.

XXVI.

O sweet, they tell me that the world
 is hard, and harsh of mind,
 But can it be so hard, so harsh, as
 those that should be kind?
 That matters not: let come what will,
 at last the end is sure,
 And every heart that loves with truth
 is equal to endure.

TO-MORROW.

I.

HER, that yer Honor was spakin' to?
 Whin, yer Honor? last year—
 Standin' here be the bridge, when last
 yer Honor was here?
 An' yer Honor ye gev her the top of
 the mornin', 'Tomorra' says
 she.
 What did they call her, yer Honor?
 They call'd her Molly Magee.
 An' yer Honor's the thrue ould blood
 that always manes to be kind,
 But there's rason in all things, yer
 Honor, tor Molly was out of
 her mind.

II.

Shure, an' meself remimbers wan
 night comin' down be the
 strame,
 An' it seems to me now like a bit of
 yisther-day in a dhrame—
 Here where yer Honor seen her—
 there was but a slip of a moon,
 But I hard thim—Molly Magee wid
 her batchelor, Danny O'Roon—
 'You've been takin' a dhrop o' the
 crathur' an' Danny says 'Troth,
 an' I been
 Dhrinkin' yer health wid Shamus
 O'Shea at Katty's shebeen;¹
 But I must be lavin' ye soon.
 'Ochone are ye goin' away?'
 'Goin' to cut the Sassenach whate' he
 says 'over the say'—

¹ Grog-shop.



THE PRIEST IN HORROR ABOUT HIS ALTAR.²¹—Page 109.



'An' whin will ye meet me agin?' an'
I hard him 'Molly asthore,
I'll meet you agin tomorra,' says he,
'be the chapel-door.'
'An' whin are ye goin' to lave me?'
'O' Monday mornin'' says he;
'An' shure thin ye'll meet me to-
morra?'

'Tomorra, tomorra, Machree!'
Thin Molly's ould mother, yer Honor,
that had no likin' for Dan,
Call'd from her cabin an' tould her to
come away from the man,
An' Molly Magee kem flyin' across
me, as light as a lark,
An' Dan stood there for a minute, an'
thin wint into the dark.
But wirrah! the storm that night—
the tundher, an' rain that fell,
An' the sthrames runnin' down at the
back o' the glin 'ud 'a dhrowned
Hell.

III.

But airth was at pace nixt mornin',
an' Hiven in its glory smiled,
As the Holy Mother o' Glory that
smiles at her sleepin' child—
Ethen—she stept an the chapel-green,
an' she turn'd herself roun'
Wid a diamond dhrop in her eye, for
Danny was not to be foun',
An' many's the time that I watch'd
her at mass lettin' down the
tear,
For the Divil a Danny was there, yer
Honor, for forty year.

IV.

Och, Molly Magee, wid the red o' the
rose an' the white o' the May,
An' yer hair as black as the night, an'
yer eyes as bright as the day!
Achora, yer laste little whisper was
sweet as the lilt of a bird!
Acushla, ye set me heart batin' to
music wid ivery word!
An' sorra the Queen wid her sceptre
in sich an illigant han',
An' the fall of yer foot in the dance
was as light as snow an the
lan',

An' the sun kent out of a cloud whin-
iver ye waikt in the shreet,
An' Shamus O'Shea was yer shadda,
an' laid himself undher yer
feet,
An' I loved ye meself wid a heart
and a half, me darlin', and he
'Ud 'a shot his own sowl dead for a
kiss of ye, Molly Magee.

V.

But shure we wor betther frinds whin
I crack'd his skull for her
sake,
An' he ped me back wid the best he
could give at ould Donovan's
wake—
For the boys wor about her agin whin
Dan didn't come to the fore,
An' Shamus along wid the rest, but
she put thim all to the door.
An', afther, I thried her meself av the
bird 'ud come to me call,
But Molly, begorrah, 'ud listen to
naither at all, at all.

VI.

An' her nabours an frinds 'ud consowl
an' condowl wid her, airly and
late,
'Your Danny,' they says, 'niver crasst
over say to the Sassenach
whate;
He's gone to the States, aroon, an'
he's married another wite,
An' ye'll niver set eyes an the face of
the thraithur agin in life!
An' to dhrame of a married man,
death alive, is a mortal sin.'
But Molly says 'I'd his hand-promise,
an' shure he'll meet me agin.'

VII.

An' afther her paärints had inter'd
glory, an' both in wan day,
She began to spake to herself, the
crathur, an' whisper, an' say
'Tomorra, Tomorra!' an' Father
Melowny he tuk her in han',
'Molly, you're manin', he says, 'me
dear, av I undherstan',

That ye'll meet your paärints agin an'
yer Danny O'Roon afore God,
Wid his blessed Marthys an' Saints;
an' she gev him a frindly nod,
'Tomorra, Tomorra,' she says, an'
she didn't intind to desave,
But her wits wor dead, an' her hair
was as white as the snow an a
grave.

VIII.

Arrah now, here last month they wor
diggin' the bog, an' they foun'
Dhrownd in black bog-wather a
corp lyin' undher groun'.

IX.

Yer Honor's own agint, he says to me
wanst, at Katty's shebeen,
'The Devil take all the black lan', for
a blessin' 'ud come wid the
green!'
An' where 'ud the poor man, thin, cut
his bit o' turf for the fire?
But och! bad scan to the bogs whin
they swallies the man intire!
An' sorra the bog that's in Hiven wid
all the light an' the glow,
An' there's hate enough, shure, wid-
out *thin* in the Devil's kitchen
below.

X.

Thim ould blind nagers in Egypt, I
hard his Riverence say,
Could keep their haithen kings in the
flesh for the Jidgemint day,
An', faix, be the pipér o' Moses, they
kep the cat an' the dog,
But it 'ud 'a been aisier work a they
lived be an Irish bog.

XI.

How-an-iver they laid this body they
foun' an the grass
Be the chapel-door, an' the people 'ud
see it that wint in to mass—
But a frish generation had riz, an'
most of the ould was few,
An' I didn't know him meself, an'
none of the parish knew.

XII.

But Molly kem limpin' up wid her
stick, she was lamed iv a knee,
Thin a slip of a gossoon call'd, 'Div
ye know him, Molly Magee?'
An' she stood up strait as the Queen
of the world—she lifted her
head—
'He said he would meet me tomorra l'
an' dhropt down dead an the
dead.

XIII.

Och, Molly, we thought, machree, ye
would start back agin into life,
Whin we laid yez, aich be aich, at yer
wake like husban' an' wife.
Sorra the dhryeye thin but was wet
for the frinds that was gone!
Sorra the silent throat but we hard it
cryin' 'Ochone!'
An' Shamus O'Shea that has now
ten childer, hansome an' tall,
Him an' his childer wor keenin' as if
he had lost thim all.

XIV.

Thin his Riverence buried thim both
in wan grave be the dead boor-
tree,¹
The young man Danny O'Roon wid
his ould woman, Molly Magee.

XV.

May all the flowers o' Jeroosilim
blossom an' spring from the
grass,
Imbrashin' an' kissin' aich other—as
ye did—over yer Crass!
An' the lark fly out o' the flowers wid
his song to the Sun an' the
Moon,
An' tell thim in Hiven about Molly
Magee an' her Danny O'Roon,
Till Holy St. Pether gets up wid his
kays an' opens the gate!
An' shure, be the Crass, that's betther
nor cuttin' the Sassenach whate

¹ Elder-tree.

To be there wid the Blessed Mother,
an' Saints an' Marthys galore,
An' singin' yer 'Aves' an' 'Pathers',
for iver an' ivermore.

XVI.

An' now that I tould yer Honor what-
iver I hard an' seen,
Yer Honor 'ill give me a thrille to
dhrink yer health in potheen.

THE SPINSTER'S SWEET-
ARTS.

I.

MILK for my sweet-arts, Bess! fur it
mun be the time about now
When Molly cooms in fro' the far-end
close wi' her paäils fro' the cow.
Eh! tha be new to the plaäce—thou'rt
gaäpin'—doesn't tha see
I calls' em arter the fellers es once
was sweet upo' me?

II.

Naäy to be sewer it be past'er time.
What maäkes 'er sa laäte?
Goä to the laäne at the back, an'
looök thruf Maddison's gaäte!

III.

Sweet-arts! Molly belike may'a
lighted to-night upo' one.
Sweet-arts! thanks to the Lord that I
niver not listen'd to noän!
So I sits i' my oän armchair wi' my oän
kettle there o' the hob,
An' Tommy the fust, an' Tommy the
second, an' Steevie an' Rob.

IV.

Rob, coom oop 'ere o' my knee. Thou
sees that i' spite o' the men
I 'a kep' thruf thick an' thin my two
'conderd a-year to mysen;
Yis! thaw tha call'd me es pretty es
ony lass i' the Shere;
An' thou be es pretty a Tabby, but
Robby I seed thruf ya there.

V.

Feyther 'ud saäy I wur ugly es sin,
an' I beänt not vaäin,
But I niver wur downright bugly, thaw
soom 'ud 'a thowt ma plaäin,
An' I wasn't sa plaäin i' pink ribbons,
ye said I wur pretty i' pinks,
An' I liked to 'ear it I did, but I beänt
sich a fool as ye thinks;
Ye was stroäkin ma down wi' the 'air,
as I be a-stroäkin o' you,
But whiniver I looöked i' the glass I
wur sewer that it couldn't be
true;
Niver wur pretty, not I, but ye know'd
it wur pleasant to 'ear,
Thaw it warn't not me es wur pretty,
but my two 'oonderd a-year.

VI.

D'ya mind the murnin' when we was
a-walkin' together, an' stood
By the claäy'd-oop pond, that the
foälk be sa scared at, i'
Gigglesby wood,
Wheer the poor wrench drowndid
hersen, black Sal, es 'ed been
disgraaced?
An' I feel'd thy arm es I stood wur a-
creeäpin about my waäist;
An' me es wur allus afear'd of a man's
gittin' ower fond,
I sidled awaäy an' awaäy till I plumpt
foot fust i' the pond;
And, Robby, I niver 'a liked tha sa
well, as I did that daäy,
Fur tha joompt in thysen, an' tha
hoickt my feet wi' a flop fro'
the claäy.
Ay, stick oop thy back, an' set oop
thy taäil, tha may gie me a kiss,
Fur I walk'd wi' tha all the way hoam
an' wur niver sa nigh saäyin'
Yis.
But wa boäth was i' sich a clat we was
shaamed to cross Gigglesby
Greäcän,
Fur a cat may looök at a king thou
knaws but the cat mun be cleän.
Sa we boäth on us kep out o' sight o'
the winders o' Gigglesby
Hinn—

Naäy, but the claws o' tha! quiet!
they pricks cleän thru' to the
skin—

An' wa boäth slinkt 'oäm by the
brokken shed i' the laäne at the
back,

Wheer the poodle runn'd at tha once,
an' thou runn'd oop o' the
thack;

An' tha squee'dg'd my 'and i' the shed,
fur theere we was forced to 'ide,
Fur I seed that Steevie wur coomin',
and one o' the Tommie's beside.

VII.

Theere now, what art'a mewin at,
Steevie? for ow't I can tell—
Robby wur fust to be sewer, or I mowt
'a liked tha as well.

VIII.

But, Robby, I thowt o' tha all the
while I wur chaängin' my gown,
An' I thowt shall I chaänge my
staäte? but, O Lord, upo'
coomin' down—

My bran-new carpet es fresh es a
midder o' flowers i' Maäv—
Why 'edn't tha wiped thy shoes? it
wur clatted all ower wi' clääy.

An' I could a' cried ammost, fur I
seed that it couldn't be,
An' Robby I gied tha a raätin that
sattled thy coortin o' me.

An' Molly an' me was agreed, as we
was a-cleänin' the floor,

That a man be a durty thing an' a
trouble an' plague wi' indoor.

But I rued it arter a bit, fur I stuck
to tha moor na the rest,

But I couldn't 'a lived wi' a man an' I
knows it be all fur the best.

IX.

Naäy—let ma stroök tha down till I
maäkes tha es smooth es silk,
But if I 'ed married tha, Robby, thou'd
not 'a been worth thy milk,
Thou'd niver 'a cotch'd ony mice but
'a left me the work to do,

And 'a taäen to the bottle beside, so
es all that I 'ears be true;
But I loovs tha to maäke thysen 'appy,
an' soa purr awaäy, my dear,
Thou' ed wellnigh purr'd ma awaäy fro'
my oän two 'oonderd a-year.

X.

Sweärin agean, you Toms, as ye used
to do twelve year sin'!

Ye niver 'eärd Steevie swear 'cep' it
wur at a dog coomin' in.

An' boath o' ye mun be fools to be
ballas a-shawin' your claws,

Fur I niver cared nothink for neither—
an' one o' ye deäð ye knows!

Coom give hoäver then, weant ye? I
warrant ye soom fine daäy—

Theere, lig down—I shall hev to gie
one or tother awaäy.

Can't ye taäke pattern by Steevie? ye
shant hev a drop fro' the paäl.

Steevie be right good manners bang
thru' to the tip o' the taäl.

XI.

Robby, git down wi' tha, wilt tha? let
Steevie coom oop o' my knee.

Steevie, my lad, thou 'ed very nigh
been the Steevie fur me!

Robby wur fust to be sewer, 'e wur
burn an' bred i' the 'ouse,

But thou be es 'ansom a tabby es iver
patted a mouse.

XII.

An' I beänt not vaän, but I knows I
'ed led tha a quieter life

Nor her wi' the hepithaph yonder!
"A faäithful an' loovin' wife!"

An' 'cos o' thy farm by the beck, an'
thy windmill oop o' the croft.

Tha thowt tha would marry ma, did
tha? but that wur a bit ower
soft,

Thaw thou was es soäber es daäy, wi'
a niced red faäce, an' es cleän

Es a shillin' fresh fro' the mint wi' a
bran-new 'eäð o' the Quecän.

An' thy farmin' es cleän es thysen',
fur, Steevie, tha kep' it sa neät

That I niver not spied sa much es a
poppy along wi' the wheät,
An' the wool of a thistle a-flyin' an'
seeädin' tha haätet to see;
'Twur es bad es a battle-twig¹ 'ere i'
my oän blue chaumber to me.
Ay, roob thy whiskers ageän ma, fur
I could 'a taäen to tha well,
But fur thy bairns, poor Steevie, a
bouncin' boy an' a gell.

XIII.

An' thou was es fond o' thy bairns es
I be mysen o' my cats,
But I niver not wish'd fur childer, I
hevn't naw likin' fur brats;
Pretty anew when ya dresses 'em oop,
an' they goäs fur a walk,
Or sits wi' their 'ands afoor 'em, an'
doesn't not 'inder the talk!
But their bottles o' pap, an' their
mucky bilis, an' the clats an'
the clouts,
An' their mashin' their toys to pieäces
an' maäkin' ma deäf wi' their
shouts,
An' hallus a-joompin' about ma as if
they was set upo' springs,
An' a haxin' ma hawkard questions,
an' saäyin' ondecet things,
An' a-callin' ma 'hugly' mayhap to
my faäce, or a teärin' my
gown—
Dear! dear! dear! I mun part them
Tommies—Steevie git down.

XIV.

Ye be wuss nor the men-tommies,
you. I tell'd ya, na moor o'
that!
Tom, lig there 'o' the cushion, an'
tother Tom 'ere o' the mat.

XV.

Theere! I ha' master'd *them*! Hed
I married the Tommies—O
Lord,
To loove an' obaäy the Tommies! I
couldn't 'a stuck by my word.

¹ Earwig.

To be horder'd about, an' waäked,
when Molly 'd put out the
light,
By a man coomin' in wi' a hiccup at
ony hour o' the night!
An' the taäble staän'd wi' 'is aäle, an'
the mud o' 'is boots o' the stairs,
An' the stink o' 'is pipe i' the 'ouse,
an' the mark o' 'is 'eäd o' the
chairs!
An' noän o' my four sweet-arts 'ud 'a
let me 'a hed my oän waäy,
Sa I likes 'em best wi' taäils when
they 'evn't a word to saäy.

XVI.

An' I sits i' my oän little parlor, an'
sarved by my oän little lass,
Wi' my oän little garden outside, an'
my oän bed o' sparrow-grass,
An' my oän door poorch wi' the wood-
bine an' jessmine a-dressin' it
greeän,
An' my oän fine Jackman i' purple a
roäbin' the 'ouse like a Queeän.

XVII.

An' the little gells hobs to ma hoffens
es I be abroad i' the laänes,
When I goäs fur to coomfit the poor
es be down wi' their haäches
an' their paäins:
An' a haäf-pot o' jam, or a mossel o'
meät when it beänt too dear,
They maäkes ma a graäter Laädy nor
'er 'i the mansion theer,
Hes 'es hallust o hax of a man how
much to spare or to spend;
An' a spinster I be an' I will be, if
soä please God, to the hend.

XVIII.

Mew! mew!—Bess wi' the milk!
what ha maäde our Molly sa
lääte?
It should 'a been 'ere by seven, an'
theere—it be strikin' height—
'Cushie wur craäzed fur 'er cauf' well
—I 'eärd 'er a maäkin' 'er
moän,

An' I thowt to mysen 'thank God
that I hevn't naw cauf o' my
oân.'

Theere!

Set it down!

Now Robby!
You Tommies shall wait to-
night
Till Robby an' Steevie 'es 'ed their
lap—an' it sarves ye right.

LOCKSLEY HALL

SIXTY YEARS AFTER.

LATE, my grandson! half the morning have I paced these sandy tracts,
Watch'd again the hollow ridges roaring into cataracts,

Wander'd back to living boyhood while I heard the curlews call,
I myself so close on death, and death itself in Locksley Hall.

So—your happy suit was blasted—she the faultless, the divine;
And you liken—boyish babble—this boy-love of yours with mine.

I myself have often babbled doubtless of a foolish past;
Babble, babble; our old England may go down in babble at last.

'Curse him!' curse your fellow-victim? call him dotard in your rage?
Eyes that lured a doting boyhood well might fool a dotard's age.

Jilted for a wealthier! wealthier? yet perhaps she was not wise;
I remember how you kiss'd the miniature with those sweet eyes.

In the hall there hangs a painting—Amy's arms about my neck—
Happy children in a sunbeam sitting on the ribs of wreck.

In my life there was a picture, she that clasp'd my neck had flown;
I was left within the shadow sitting on the wreck alone.

Yours has been a slighter ailment, will you sicken for her sake?
You, not you! your modern amourist is of easier, earthlier make.

Amy loved me, Amy fail'd me, Amy was a timid child;
But your Judith—but your worldling—*she* had never driven me wild.

She that holds the diamond necklace dearer than the golden ring,
She that finds a winter sunset fairer than a morn of Spring.

She that in her heart is brooding on his briefer lease of life,
While she vows 'till death shall part us,' she the would-be-widow wife.

She the worldling born of worldlings—father, mother—be content,
Ev'n the homely farm can teach us there is something in descent.

Yonder in that chapel, slowly sinking now into the ground,
Lies the warrior, my forefather, with his feet upon the hound.

Cross'd! for once he sail'd the sea to crush the Moslem in his pride;
Dead the warrior, dead his glory, dead the cause in which he died.

Yet how often I and Amy in the mouldering aisle have stood,
Gazing for one pensive moment on that founder of our blood.

There again I stood to-day, and where of old we knelt in prayer,
Close beneath the casement crimson with the shield of Locksley—there,

All in white Italian marble, looking still as if she smiled,
Lies my Amy dead in child-birth, dead the mother, dead the child.

Dead—and sixty years ago, and dead her aged husband now—
I this old white-headed dreamer stoop'd and kiss'd her marble brow.

Gone the fires of youth, the follies, furies, curses, passionate tears,
Gone like fires and floods and earthquakes of the planet's dawning years.

Fires that shook me once, but now to silent ashes fall'n away.
Cold upon the dead volcano sleeps the gleam of dying day.

Gone the tyrant of my youth, and mute below the chancel stones,
All his virtues—I forgive them—black in white above his bones.

Gone the comrades of my bivouac, some in fight against the foe,
Some thro' age and slow diseases, gone as all on earth will go.

Gone with whom for forty years my life in golden sequence ran,
She with all the charm of woman, she with all the breadth of man,

Strong in will and rich in wisdom, Edith, yet so lowly-sweet,
Woman to her inmost heart, and woman to her tender feet,

Very woman of very woman, nurse of ailing body and mind,
She that link'd again the broken chain that bound me to my kind.

Here to-day was Amy with me, while I wander'd down the coast,
Near us Edith's holy shadow, smiling at the sligher ghost.

Gone our sailor son thy father, Leonard early lost at sea;
Thou alone, my boy, of Amy's kin and mine art left to me.

Gone thy tender-natured mother, wearying to be left alone,
Pining for the stronger heart that once had beat beside her own.

Truth, for Truth is Truth, he worshipt, being true as he was brave;
Good, for Good is Good, he follow'd, yet he look'd beyond the grave,

Wiser there than you, that crowning barren Death as lord of all,
Deem this over-tragic drama's closing curtain is the pall!

Beautiful was death in him, who saw the death, but kept the deck,
Saving women and their babes, and sinking with the sinking wreck,

Gone for ever! Ever? no—for since our dying race began,
Ever, ever, and for ever was the leading light of man.

Those that in barbarian burials kill'd the slave, and slew the wife
Felt within themselves the sacred-passion of the second life.

Indian warriors dream of ampler hunting grounds beyond the night;
Ev'n the black Australian dying hopes he shall return, a white.

Truth for truth, and good for good! The Good, the True, the Pure, the Just—
Take the charm 'For ever' from them, and they crumble into dust.

Gone the cry of 'Forward, Forward,' lost within a growing gloom;
Lost, or only heard in silence from the silence of a tomb.

Half the marvels of my morning, triumphs over time and space,
Staled by frequency, shrunk by usage into commonest commonplace!

'Forward' rang the voices then, and of the many mine was one.
Let us hush this cry of 'Forward' till ten thousand years have gone.

Far among the vanish'd races, old Assyrian kings would flay
Captives whom they caught in battle—iron-hearted victors they.

Agès after, while in Asia, he that led the wild Moguls,
Timur built his ghastly tower of eighty thousand human skulls,

Then, and here in Edward's time, an age of noblest English names,
Christain conquerors took and hung the conquer'd Christian into flames.

Love your enemy, bless your haters, said the Greatest of the great;
Christian love among the Churches look'd the twin of heathen hate.

From the golden alms of Blessing man had coin'd himself a curse:
Rome of Cæsar, Rome of Peter, which was crueller? which was worse?

France had shown a light to all men, preach'd a Gospel, all men's good;
Celtic Demos rose a Demon, shriek'd and slaked the light with blood.

Hope was ever on her mountain, watching till the day begun—
Crown'd with sunlight—over darkness—from the still unrisen sun.

Have we grown at last beyond the passions of the primal clan?
'Kill your enemy, for you hate him,' still, 'your enemy' was a man.

Have we sunk below them? peasants maim the helpless horse, and drive
Innocent cattle under thatch, and burn the kindlier brutes alive.

Brutes, the brutes are not your wrongers—burnt at midnight, found at morn,
Twisted hard in mortal agony with their offspring, born-unborn,

Clinging to the silent mother! Are we devils? are we men?
Sweet St. Francis of Assisi, would that he were here again.

He that in his Catholic wholeness used to call the very flowers
Sisters, brothers—and the beasts—whose pains are hardly less than ours!

Chaos, Cosmos! Cosmos, Chaos! who can tell how all will end?
Read the wide world's annals, you, and take their wisdom for your friend.

Hope the best, but hold the Present fatal daughter of the Past,
Shape your heart to front the hour, but dream not that the hour will last.

Ay, if dynamite and revolver leave you courage to be wise:
When was age so cramm'd with menace? madness? written, spoken lies?

Envy wears the mask of Love, and, laughing soher fact to scorn,
Cries to Weakest as to Strongest, 'Ye are equals, equal-born.'

Equal-born? O yes, if yonder hill be level with the flat.
Charm us, Orator, till the Lion look no larger than the Cat,

Till the Cat thro' that mirage of overheated language loom
Larger than the Lion,—Demos end in working its own doom.

Russia bursts our Indian barrier, shall we fight her? shall we yield?
Pause! before you sound the trumpet, hear the voices from the field.

Those three hundred millions under one Imperial sceptre now,
Shall we hold them? shall we loose them? take the suffrage of the plow.

Nay, but these would feel and follow Truth if only you and you,
Rivals of realm-ruining party, when you speak were wholly true.

Plowmen, Shepherds, have I found, and more than once, and still could find,
Sons of God, and kings of men in utter nobleness of mind,

Truthful, trustful, looking upward to the practised hustings-liar;
So the Higher wields the Lower, while the Lower is the Higher.

Here and there a cotter's babe is royal-born by right divine;
Here and there my lord is lower than his oxen or his swine.

Chaos, Cosmos! Cosmos, Chaos! once again the sickening game:
Freedom, free to slay herself, and dying while they shout her name.

Step by step we gain'd a freedom known to Europe, known to all;
Step by step we rose to greatness,—thro' the tonguesters we may fall.

You that woo the Voices—tell them 'old experience is a fool,'
Teach your flatter'd kings that only those who cannot read can rule.

Pluck the mighty from their seat, but set no meek ones in their place;
Pillory Wisdom in your markets, pelt your offal at her face.

Tumble Nature heel o'er head, and, yelling with the yelling street,
Set the feet above the brain and swear the brain is in the feet.

Bring the old dark ages back without the faith, without the hope,
Break the State, the Church, the Throne, and roll their ruins down the slope.

Authors—essayist, atheist, novelist, realist, rhymester, play your part,
Paint the mortal shame of nature with the living hues of Art.

Rip your brothers' vices open, strip your own foul passions bare; [stare.
Down with Reticence, down with Reverence—forward—naked—let them

Feed the budding rose of boyhood with the drainage of your sewer;
Send the drain into the fountain, lest the stream should issue pure.

Set the maiden fancies wallowing in the troughs of Zolaism,—
Forward, forward, ay and backward, downward too into the abysm.

Do your best to charm the worst, to lower the rising race of men;
Have we risen from out the beast, then back into the beast again?

Only 'dust to dust' for me that sicken at your lawless din,
Dust in wholesome old-world dust before the newer world begin.

Heated am I? you—you wonder—well, it scarce becomes mine age—
Patience! let the dying actor mouth his last upon the stage.

Cries of unprogressive dotage ere the dotard fall asleep?
Noises of a current narrowing, not the music of a deep?

Ay, for doubtless I am old, and think gray thoughts, for I am gray:
After all the stormy changes shall we find a changeless May?

After madness, after massacre, Jacobinism and Jacquerie,
Some diviner force to guide us thro' the days I shall not see?

When the schemes and all the systems, Kingdoms and Republics fall,
Something kindlier, higher, holier—all for each and each for all?

All the full-brain, half-brain races, led by Justice, Love, and Truth;
All the millions one at length with all the visions of my youth?

All diseases quench'd by Science, no man halt, or deaf or blind;
Stronger ever born of weaker, lustier body, larger mind?

Earth at last a warless world, a single race, a single tongue—
I have seen her far away—for is not Earth as yet so young?—

Every tiger madness muzzled, every serpent passion kill'd,
Every grim ravine a garden, every blazing desert till'd,

Robed in universal harvest up to either pole she smiles,
Universal ocean softly washing all her warless Isles.

Warless? when her tens are thousands, and her thousands millions, then—
All her harvest all too narrow—who can fancy warless men?

Warless? war will die out late then. Will it ever? late or soon?
Can it, till this outworn earth be dead as yon dead world the moon?

Dead the new astronomy calls her. . . . On this day and at this hour,
In this gap between the sandhills, whence you see the Locksley tower,

Here we met, our latest meeting—Amy—sixty years ago—
She and I—the moon was falling greenish thro' a rosy glow,

Just above the gateway tower, and even where you see her now—
Here we stood and claspt each other, swore the seeming-deathless vow. . .

Dead, but how her living glory lights the hall, the dune, the grass!
Yet the moonlight is the sunlight, and the sun himself will pass.

Venus near her! smiling downward at this earthlier earth of ours,
Closer on the Sun, perhaps a world of never fading flowers.

Hesper, whom the poet call'd the Bringer home of all good things.
All good things may move in Hesper, perfect peoples, perfect kings.

Hesper—Venus—were we native to that splendor or in Mars,
We should see the Globe we groan in, fairest of their evening stars.

Could we dream of wars and carnage, craft and madness, lust and spite,
Roaring London, raving Paris, in that point of peaceful light?

Might we not in glancing heavenward on a star so silver-fair,
Yearn, and clasp the hands and murmur, 'Would to God that we were there'?

Forward, backward, backward, forward, in the immeasurable sea,
Sway'd by vaster ebbs and flows than can be known to you or me.

All the suns—are these but symbols of innumerable man,
Man or Mind that sees a shadow of the planner or the plan?

Is there evil but on earth? or pain in every peopled sphere?
Well be grateful for the sounding watchword 'Evolution' here, . .

Evolution ever climbing after some ideal good,
And Reversion ever dragging Evolution in the mud.

What are men that He should heed us? cried the king of sacred song;
Insects of an hour, that hourly work their brother insect wrong,

While the silent Heavens roll, and Suns along their fiery way,
All their planets whirling round them, flash a million miles a day.

Many an Æon moulded earth before her highest, man, was born,
Many an Æon too may pass when earth is manless and forlorn,

Earth so huge, and yet so bounded—pools of salt, and plots of land—
Shallow skin of green and azure—chains of mountain, grains of sand!

Only That which made us, meant us to be mightier by and by,
Set the sphere of all the boundless Heavens within the human eye,

Sent the shadow of Himself, the boundless, thro' the human soul;
Boundless inward, in the atom, boundless outward, in the Whole.

* * * * *

Here is Locksley Hall, my grandson, here the lion-guarded gate.
Not to-night in Locksley Hall—to-morrow—you, you come so late.

Wreck'd—your train—or all but wreck'd? a shatter'd wheel? a vicious boy!
Good, this forward, you that preach it, is it well to wish you joy?

Is it well that while we range with Science, glorying in the Time,
City children soak and blacken soul and sense in city slime?

There among the glooming alleys Progress halts on palsied feet,
Crime and hunger cast our maidens by the thousand on the street.

There the Master scrimps his haggard sempstress of her daily bread,
There a single sordid attic holds the living and the dead.

There the smouldering fire of fever creeps across the rotted floor,
And the crowded couch of incest in the warrens of the poor.

Nay, your pardon, cry your 'forward,' yours are hope and youth, but I—
Eighty winters leave the dog too lame to follow with the cry,

Lame and old, and past his time, and passing now into the night;
Yet I would the rising race were half as eager for the light.

Light the fading gleam of Even? light the glimmer of the dawn?
Aged eyes may take the growing glimmer for the gleam withdrawn.

Far away beyond her myriad coming changes earth will be
Something other than the wildest modern guess of you and me.

Earth may reach her earthly-worst, or if she gain her earthly-best,
Would she find her human offspring this ideal man at rest?

Forward then, but still remember how the course of Time will swerve,
Crook and turn upon itself in many a backward streaming curve.

Not the Hall to-night, my grandson! Death and Silence hold their own.
Leave the Master in the first dark hour of his last sleep alone.

Worthier soul was he than I am, sound and honest, rustic Squire,
Kindly landlord, boon companion—youthful jealousy is a liar.

Cast the poison from your bosom, oust the madness from your brain.
Let the trampled servant show you that you have not lived in vain.

Youthful ! youth and age are scholars yet but in the lower school,
Nor is he the wisest man who never proved himself a fool.

Yonder lies our young sea-village—Art and Grace are less and less :
Science grows and Beauty dwindles—roofs of slated hideousness !

There is one old Hostel left us where they swing the Locksley shield,
Till the peasant cow shall butt the ' Lion passant ' from his field.

Poor old Heraldry, poor old History, poor old Poetry, passing hence,
In the common deluge drowning old political common-sense !

Poor old voice of eighty crying after voices that have fled !
All I loved are vanish'd voices, all my steps are on the dead.

All the world is ghost to me, and as the phantom disappears,
Forward far and far from here is all the hope of eighty years.

* * * * *

In this Hostel—I remember—I repent it o'er his grave—
Like a clown—by chance he met me—I refused the hand he gave.

From that casement where the trailer mantles all the mouldering bricks—
I was then in early boyhood, Edith but a child of six—

While I shelter'd in this archway from a day of driving showers—
Peeped the winsome face of Edith like a flower among the flowers.

Here to-night ! the Hall to-morrow, when they toll the Chapel bell !
Shall I hear in one dark room a wailing, ' I have loved thee well.'

Then a peal that shakes the portal—one has come to claim his bride,
Her that shrank, and put me from her, shriek'd, and started from my side—

Silent echoes ! You, my Leonard, use and not abuse your day,
Move among your people, know them, follow him who led the way,

Strove for sixty widow'd years to help his homelier brother men,
Served the poor, and built the cottage, raised the school, and drain'd the fen.

Hears he now the Voice that wrong'd him ? who shall swear it cannot be ?
Earth would never touch her worst, were one in fifty such as he.

Ere she gain her Heavenly-best, a God must mingle with the game :
Nay, there may be those about us whom we neither see nor name,

Felt within us as ourselves, the Powers of Good, the Powers of Ill,
Strowing balm, or shedding poison in the fountains of the Will.

Follow you the Star that lights a desert pathway, yours or mine.
Forward, till you see the highest Human Nature is divine.

Follow Light, and do the Right—for man can half-control his doom—
Till you find the deathless Angel seated in the vacant tomb.

Forward, let the stormy moment fly and mingle with the Past.
I that loathed, have come to love him. Love will conquer at the last.

Gone at eighty, mine own age, and I and you will bear the pall;
Then I leave thee Lord and Master, latest Lord of Locksley Hall.

PROLOGUE

TO GENERAL HAMLEY.

Our birches yellowing and from each
The light leaf falling fast,
While squirrels from our fiery beech
Were bearing off the mast,
You came, and look'd and loved the view

Long-known and loved by me,
Green Sussex fading into blue
With one gray glimpse of sea;
And, gazing from this height alone,
We spoke of what had been
Most marvellous in the wars your own
Crimean eyes had seen;
And now—like old-world inns that take

Some warrior for a sign
That therewithin a guest may make
True cheer with honest wine—
Because you heard the lines I read
Nor utter'd word of blame,
I dare without your leave to head
These rhymings with your name,
Who know you but as one of those
I fain would meet again,
Yet know you, as your England knows
That you and all your men
Were soldiers to her heart's desire,
When, in the vanish'd year,
You saw the league-long rampart-fire
Flare from Tel-el-Kebir
Thro' darkness, and the foe was driven,
And Wolsley overthrew
Arâbi, and the stars in heaven
Paled, and the glory grew.

THE CHARGE OF THE HEAVY BRIGADE AT BALACLAVA.

OCTOBER 25, 1854.

I.

THE charge of the gallant three hundred, the Heavy Brigade!
Down the hill, down the hill, thousands of Russians,
Thousands of horsemen, drew to the valley—and stay'd;
For Scarlett and Scarlett's three hundred were riding by
When the points of the Russian lances arose in the sky;
And he call'd 'Left wheel into line!' and they wheel'd and obey'd.
Then he look'd at the host that had halted he knew not why,
And he turn'd half round, and he bad his trumpeter sound
To the charge, and he rode on ahead, as he waved his blade
To the gallant three hundred whose glory will never die—
'Follow,' and up the hill, up the hill, up the hill,
Follow'd the Heavy Brigade.

II.

The trumpet, the gallop, the charge, and the might of the fight!
Thousands of horsemen had gather'd there on the height,
With a wing push'd out to the left and a wing to the right,

And who shall escape if they close?
but he dash'd up alone
Thro' the great gray slope of men,
Sway'd his sabre, and held his own
Like an Englishman there and then;
All in a moment follow'd with force
Three that were next in their fiery
course,
Wedge'd themselves in^a between horse
and horse,
Fought for their lives in the narrow
gap they had made—
Four amid thousands! and up the
hill, up the hill,
Gallopt the gallant three hundred, the
Heavy Brigade.

III.

Fell like a cannonshot,
Burst like a thunderbolt,
Crash'd like a hurricane,
Broke thro' the mass from below,
Drove thro' the midst of the foe,
Plunged up and down, to and fro,
Rode flashing blow upon blow,
Brave Inniskillens and Greys
Whirling their sabres in circles of
light!
And some of us, all in amaze,
Who were held for a while from the
fight,
And were only standing at gaze,
When the dark-muffled Russian
crowd
Folded its wings from the left and
the right,
And roll'd them around like a
cloud,—
O mad for the charge and the battle
were we,
When our own good redcoats sank
from sight,
Like drops of blood in a dark-gray
sea,
And we turn'd to each other, whisper-
ing, all dismay'd,
'Lost are the gallant three hundred of
Scarlett's Brigade!'

IV.

'Lost one and all' were the words
Mutter'd in our dismay;

But they rode like Victors and Lords
Thro' the forest of lances and swords
In the heart of the Russian hordes,
They rode, or they stood at bay—
Struck with the sword-hand and slew,
Down with the bridle-hand drew
The foe from the saddle and threw
Underfoot there in the fray—
Ranged like a storm or stood like a
rock
In the wave of a stormy day;
Till suddenly shock upon shock
Stagger'd the mass from without,
Drove it in wild disarray,
For our men gallopt up with a cheer
and a shout,
And the foeman surged, and waver'd,
and reel'd
Up the hill, up the hill, up the hill,
out of the field,
And over the brow and away.

V.

Glory to each and to all, and the
charge that they made!
Glory to all the three hundred, and
all the Brigade!

NOTE.—The 'three hundred' of the
'Heavy Brigade' who made this famous
charge were the Scots Greys and the 2nd
squadron of Inniskillings; the remainder
of the 'Heavy Brigade' subsequently
dashing up to their support.

The 'three' were Scarlett's aid-de-camp,
Elliot, and the trumpeter and Shegog the
orderly, who had been close behind him.

EPILOGUE.

IRENE.

Not this way will you set your name
A star among the stars.

POET.

What way?

IRENE.

You praise when you should
blame

The barbarism of wars.
A juster epoch has begun.

POET.

Yet tho' this cheek be gray,
And that bright hair the modern sun,
Those eyes the blue to-day,
You wrong me, passionate little friend.
I would that wars should cease,
I would the globe from end to end
Might sow and reap in peace,
And some new Spirit o'erbear the old,
Or Trade refrain the Powers
From war with kindly links of gold,
Or Love with wreaths of flowers.
Slav, Teuton, Kelt, I count them all
My friends and brother souls,
With all the peoples, great and small,
That wheel between the poles.
But since, our mortal shadow, Ill
To waste this earth began—
Perchance from some abuse of Will
In worlds before the man
Involving ours—he needs must fight
To make true peace his own,
He needs must combat might with
might,
Or Might would rule alone ;
And who loves War for War's own
sake
Is fool, or crazed, or worse ;
But let the patriot-soldier take
His meed of fame in verse ;
Nay—tho' that realm were in the
wrong
For which her warriors bleed,
It still were right to crown with song
The warrior's noble deed—
A crown the Singer hopes may last,
For so the deed endures ;
But Song will vanish in the Vast ;
And that large phrase of yours
'A Star among the stars,' my dear,
Is girlish talk at best ;
For dare we dally with the sphere
As he did half in jest,
Old Horace ? 'I will strike' said he
'The stars with head sublime,'
But scarce could see, as now we see,
The man in Space and Time,
So drew perchance a happier lot
Than ours, who rhyme to-day.

The fires that arch this dusky dot—
Yon myriad-worlded way—
The vast sun-clusters' gather'd blaze,
World-isles in lonely skies,
Whole heavens within themselves,
amaze
Our brief humanities ;
And so does Earth ; for Homer's
fame,
Tho' carved in harder stone—
The falling drop will make his name.
As mortal as my own.

IRENE.

No !

POET.

Let it live then—ay, till when ?
Earth passes, all is lost
In what they prophesy, our wise men,
Sun-flame or sunless frost,
And deed and song alike are swept
Away, and all in vain
As far as man can see, except
The man himself remain ;
And tho', in this lean age forlorn,
'Too many a voice may cry
That man can have no after-morn,
Not yet of these am I.
The man remains, and whatsoever
He wrought of good or brave
Will mould him thro' the cycle-year
That dawns behind the grave.

And here the Singer for his Art
Not all in vain may plead
'The song that nerves a nation's
heart,
Is in itself a deed.'

TO VIRGIL.

WRITTEN AT THE REQUEST OF THE
MANTUANS FOR THE NINETEENTH
CENTENARY OF VIRGIL'S DEATH.

I.

ROMAN VIRGIL, thou that singest
Iliad's lofty temples robed in
fire,

Ilion falling, Rome arising,
wars, and filial faith, and Dido's
pyre;

II.

Landscape-lover, lord of language
more than he that sang the
Works and Days,
All the chosen coin of fancy
flashing out from many a golden
phrase;

III.

Thou that singest wheat and woodland,
tilth and vineyard, hive and
horse and herd;
All the charm of all the Muses
often flowering in a lonely word;

IV.

Poet of the happy Tityrus
piping underneath his beechen
bowers;
Poet of the poet-satyr
whom the laughing shepherd
bound with flowers;

V.

Chanter of the Pollio, glorying
in the blissful years again to be,
Summers of the snakeless meadow,
unlaborious earth and oarless
sea;

VI.

Thou that seest Universal
Nature moved by Universal
Mind;
Thou majestic in thy sadness
at the doubtful doom of human
kind;

VII.

Light among the vanish'd ages;
star that gildest yet this phan-
tom shore;
Golden branch amid the shadows,
kings and realms that pass to
rise no more;

VIII.

Now thy Forum roars no longer,
fallen every purple Cæsar's
dome—
Tho' thine ocean-roll of rhythm
sound for ever of Imperial
Rome—

IX.

Now the Rome of slaves hath perish'd,
and the Rome of freemen holds
her place,
I, from out the Northern Island
sunder'd once from all the
human race,

X.

I salute thee, Mantovano,
I that loved thee since my day
began,
Wielder of the stateliest measure
ever moulded by the lips of
man.

THE DEAD PROPHET.

182—.

I.

DEAD!
And the Muses cried with a stormy
cry
'Send them no more, for evermore.
Let the people die.'

II.

Dead!
'Is it *he* then brought so low?'
And a careless people flock'd from
the fields
With a purse to pay for the show.

III.

Dead, who had served his time,
Was one of the people's kings,
Had labor'd in lifting them out of
slime,
And showing them, souls have
wings!

IV.

Dumb on the winter heath he lay.
His friends had stript him bare,
And roll'd his nakedness everyway
That all the crowd might stare.

V.

A storm-worn signpost not to be read,
And a tree with a moulder'd nest
On its barkless bones, stood stark by
the dead;
And behind him, low in the West,

VI.

With shifting ladders of shadow and
light,
And blurr'd in color and form,
The sun hung over the gates of Night,
And glared at a coming storm.

VII.

Then glided a vulturous Beldam
forth,
That on dumb death had thriven;
They call'd her 'Reverence' here
upon earth,
And 'The Curse of the Prophet' in
Heaven.

VIII.

She knelt—'We worship him'—all
but wept—
'So great so noble was he!'
She clear'd her sight, she arose, she
swept
The dust of earth from her knee.

IX.

'Great! for he spoke and the people
heard,
And his eloquence caught like a
flame
From zone to zone of the world, till
his Word
Had won him a noble name.

X.

Noble! he sung, and the sweet sound
ran

Thro' palace and cottage door,
For he touch'd on the whole sad
planet of man,
The kings and the rich and the
poor;

XI.

And he sung not alone of an old sun
set,
But a sun coming up in his youth!
Great and noble—O yes—but yet—
For man is a lover of Truth,

XII.

And bound to follow, wherever she go
Stark-naked, and up or down,
Thro' her high hill-passes of stainless
snow,
Or the foulest sewer of the town—

XIII.

Noble and great—O ay—but then,
'Tho' a prophet should have his due,
Was he noblier-fashion'd than other
men?
Shall we see to it, I and you?

XIV.

For since he would sit on a Prophet's
seat,
As a lord of the Human soul,
We needs must scan him from head
to feet
Were it but for a wart or a mole?'

XV.

His wife and his child stood by him in
tears,
But she—she push'd them aside.
'Tho' a name may last for a thousand
years,
Yet a truth is a truth,' she cried.

XVI.

And she that had haunted his pathway
still,
Had often truckled and cower'd
When he rose in his wrath, and had
yielded her will
To the master, as overpower'd,

XVII.

She tumbled his helpless corpse about.
'Small blemish upon the skin!
But I think we know what is fair
without
Is often as foul within.'

XVIII.

She crouch'd, she tore him part from
part,
And out of his body she drew
The red 'Blood-eagle'¹ of liver and
heart;
She held them up to the view;

XIX.

She gabbled, as she groped in the
dead,
And all the people were pleased;
'See, what a little heart,' she said,
'And the liver is half-diseased!'

XX.

She tore the Prophet after death,
And the people paid her well.
Lightnings flicker'd along the heath;
One shriek'd 'The fires of Hell!'

EARLY SPRING.

I.

ONCE more the Heavenly Power
Makes all things new,
And domes the red-plow'd hills
With loving blue;
The blackbirds have their wills,
The throistles too.

II.

Opens a door in Heaven;
From skies of glass
A Jacob's ladder falls
On greenning grass,

¹ Old Viking term for lungs, liver, etc.,
when torn by the conqueror out of the body
of the conquered.

And o'er the mountain-walls
Young angels pass.

III.

Before them fleets the shower,
And burst the buds,
And shine the level lands,
And flash the floods;
The stars are from their hands
Flung thro' the woods,

IV.

The woods with living airs
How softly fann'd,
Light airs from where the deep,
All down the sand,
Is breathing in his sleep,
Heard by the land.

V.

O follow, leaping blood,
The season's lure!
O heart, look down and up
Serene, secure,
Warm as the crocus cup,
Like snowdrops, pure!

VI.

Past, Future glimpse and fade
Thro' some slight spell,
A gleam from yonder vale,
Some far blue fell,
And sympathies, how frail,
In sound and smell!

VII.

Till at thy chuckled note,
Thou twinkling bird,
The fairy fancies range,
And, lightly stirr'd,
Ring little bells of change
From word to word.

VIII.

For now the Heavenly Power
Makes all things new,
And thaws the cold, and fills
The flower with dew;
The blackbirds have their wills,
The poets too.

PREFATORY POEM TO MY
BROTHER'S SONNETS.

Midnight, June 30, 1879.

I.

MIDNIGHT—in no midsummer tune
The breakers lash the shores:
The cuckoo of a joyless June
Is calling out of doors:

And thou hast vanish'd from thine own
To that which looks like rest,
True brother, only to be known
By those who love thee best.

II.

Midnight—and joyless June gone by,
And from the deluged park
The cuckoo of a worse July
Is calling thro' the dark:

But thou art silent underground,
And o'er thee streams the rain,
True poet, surely to be found
When Truth is found again.

III.

And, now to these unsummer'd skies
The summer bird is still,
Far off a phantom cuckoo cries
From out a phantom hill;

And thro' this midnight breaks the sun
Of sixty years away,
The light of days when life begun,
The days that seem to-day,

When all my griefs were shared with
thee,

As all my hopes were thine—
As all thou wert was one with me,
May all thou art be mine!

'FRATER AVE ATQUE VALE.'

Row us out from Desenzano, to your
Sirmione row!
So they row'd, and there we landed—
'O venusta Sirmio!'

There to me thro' all the groves of
olive in the summer glow,
There beneath the Roman ruin where
the purple flowers grow,
Came that 'Ave atque Vale' of the
Poet's hopeless woe,
Tenderest of Roman poets nineteen-
hundred years ago,
'Frater Ave atque Vale'—as we wan-
der'd to and fro
Gazing at the Lydian laughter of the
Garda Lake below
Sweet Catullus's all-but-island, olive-
silvery Sirmio!

HELEN'S TOWER.¹

HELEN'S TOWER, here I stand,
Dominant over sea and land.
Son's love built me, and I hold
Mother's love in letter'd gold.
Love is in and out of time,
I am mortal stone and lime.
Would my granite girth were strong
As either love, to last as long!
I should wear my crown entire
To and thro' the Doomsday fire,
And be found of angel eyes
In earth's recurring Paradise.

EPITAPH ON LORD STRAT-
FORD DE REDCLIFFE.

IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

THOU third great Canning, stand
among our best
And noblest, now thy long day's
work hath ceased,
Here silent in our Minster of the
West
Who wert the voice of England in
the East.

¹ Written at the request of my friend, Lord
Dufferin.

EPITAPH
ON GENERAL GORDON.

IN THE GORDON BOYS' NATIONAL
MEMORIAL HOME NEAR WOKING.

WARRIOR of God, man's friend, and
tyrant's foe,
Now somewhere dead far in the
waste Soudan,
Thou livest in all hearts, for all men
know
This earth has never borne a nobler
man.

EPITAPH ON CANTON.

IN ST. MARGARET'S, WESTMINSTER.

FIAT LUX (his motto).

THY prayer was 'Light—more Light—
while Time shall last !'
Thou sawest a glory growing on the
night,
But not the shadows which that light
would cast,
Till shadows vanish in the Light of
Light.

TO THE DUKE OF ARGYLL.

O PATRIOT Statesman, be thou wise to
know
The limits of resistance, and the
bounds
Determining concession ; still be bold
Not only to slight praise but suffer
scorn ;
And be thy heart a fortress to main-
tain
The day against the moment, and the
year
Against the day · thy voice, a music
heard
Thro' all the yells and counter-yells of
feud

And faction, and thy will, a power to
make
This ever-changing world of circum-
stance,
In changing, chime with never-chang-
ing Law.

HANDS ALL ROUND.

FIRST pledge our Queen this solemn
night,
Then drink to England, every guest ;
That man's the best Cosmopolite
Who loves his native country best.
May freedom's oak for ever live
With stronger life from day to day ;
That man's the true Conservative
Who lops the moulder'd branch
·away.

Hands all round !

God the traitor's hope confound !
To this great cause of Freedom drink,
my friends,
And the great name of England,
round and round.

To all the loyal hearts who long
To keep our English Empire whole !
To all our noble sons, the strong
New England of the Southern Pole !
To England under Indian skies,
To those dark millions of her realm !
To Canada whom we love and prize,
Whatever statesman hold the helm.

Hands all round !

God the traitor's hope confound !
To this great name of England drink,
my friends,
And all her glorious empire, round
and round.

To all our statesmen so they be
True leaders of the land's desire !
To both our Houses, may they see
Beyond the borough and the shire !
We sail'd wherever ship could sail,
We founded many a mighty state ;
Pray God our greatness may not fail
Thro' craven fears of being great.
Hands all round !

God the traitor's hope confound !
To this great cause of Freedom drink,
my friends,
And the great name of England,
round and round.

FREEDOM.

I.

O THOU so fair in summers gone,
While yet thy fresh and virgin soul
Inform'd the pillar'd Parthenon,
The glittering Capitol ;

II.

So fair in southern sunshine bathed,
But scarce of such majestic mien
As here with forehead vapor-swathed
In meadows ever green ;

III.

For thou—when Athens reign'd and
Rome,
Thy glorious eyes were dimm'd with
pain
To mark in many a freeman's home
The slave, the scourge, the chain ;

IV.

O follower of the Vision, still
In motion to the distant gleam,
Howe'er blind force and brainless will
May jar thy golden dream

V.

Of Knowledge fusing class with class,
Of civic Hate no more to be,
Of Love to heaven all the mass,
Till every Soul be free ;

VI.

Who yet, like Nature, wouldst not mar
By changes all too fierce and fast
This order of Her Human Star,
This heritage of the past ;

VII.

O scorner of the party cry
That wanders from the public good,
Thou—when the nations rear on high
Their idol smear'd with blood,

VIII.

And when they roll their idol down—
Of saner worship sanely proud ;
Thou loather of the lawless crown
As of the lawless crowd ;

IX.

How long thine ever-growing mind
Hath still'd the blast and strown
the wave,
Tho' some of late would raise a wind
To sing thee to thy grave,

X.

Men loud against all forms of power—
Unfurnish'd brows, tempestuous
tongues—
Expecting all things in an hour—
Brass mouths and iron lungs !

TO H. R. H. PRINCESS BEATRICE.

Two Suns of Love make day of human
life,
Which else with all its pains, and
griefs, and deaths,
Were utter darkness—one, the Sun of
dawn
That brightens thro' the Mother's ten-
der eyes,
And warms the child's awakening
world—and one
The later-rising Sun of spousal Love,
Which from her household orbit draws
the child
To move in other spheres. The
Mother weeps
At that white funeral of the single life,
Her maiden daughter's marriage ; and
her tears
Are half of pleasure, half of pain—the
child

Is happy—ev'n in leaving *her!* but
 Thou,
 True daughter, whose all-faithful, filial
 eyes
 Have seen the loneliness of earthly
 thrones,
 Wilt neither quit the widow'd Crown,
 nor let
 This later light of Love have risen in
 vain,
 But moving thro' the Mother's home,
 between
 The two that love thee, lead a sum-
 mer life,
 Sway'd by each Love, and swaying to
 each Love,
 Like some conjectured planet in mid
 heaven
 Between two Suns, and drawing down
 from both
 The light and genial warmth of double
 day.

THE FLEET.¹

I.

You, you, *if* you shall fail to under-
 stand
 What England is, and what her all-
 in-all,
 On you will come the curse of all the
 land,
 Should this old England fall
 Which Nelson left so great.

¹ The speaker said that 'he should like to be assured that other outlying portions of the Empire, the Crown colonies, and important coaling stations were being as promptly and as thoroughly fortified as the various capitals of the self-governing colonies. He was credibly informed this was not so. It was impossible, also, not to feel some degree of anxiety about the efficacy of present provision to defend and protect, by means of swift well-armed cruisers, the immense mercantile fleet of the Empire. A third source of anxiety, so far as the colonies were concerned, was the apparently insufficient provision for the rapid manufacture of armaments and their prompt

II.

His isle, the mightiest Ocean-power
 on earth,
 Our own fair isle, the lord of every
 sea—
 Her fuller franchise—what would that
 be worth—
 Her ancient fame of Free—
 Were she . . . a fallen state?

III.

Her dauntless army scatter'd, and so
 small,
 Her island-myrriads fed from alien
 lands—
 The fleet of England is her all-in-all;
 Her fleet is in your hands,
 And in her fleet her Fate.

despatch when ordered to their colonial destination. Hence the necessity for manufacturing appliances equal to the requirements, not of Great Britain alone, but of the whole Empire. But the keystone of the whole was the necessity for an overwhelmingly powerful fleet and efficient defence for all necessary coaling stations. This was as essential for the colonies as for Great Britain. It was the one condition for the continuance of the Empire. All that Continental Powers did with respect to armies England should effect with her navy. It was essentially a defensive force, and could be moved rapidly from point to point, but it should be equal to all that was expected from it. It was to strengthen the fleet that colonists would first readily tax themselves, because they realized how essential a powerful fleet was to the safety, not only of that extensive commerce sailing in every sea, but ultimately to the security of the distant portions of the Empire. Who could estimate the loss involved in even a brief period of disaster to the Imperial Navy? Any amount of money timely expended in preparation would be quite insignificant when compared with the possible calamity he had referred to.'—*Extract from Sir Graham Berry's Speech at the Colonial Institute, 9th November, 1886*

IV.

You, you, that have the ordering of
her fleet,
If you should only compass her dis-
grace,
When all men starve, the wild mob's
million feet
Will kick you from your place,
But then too late, too late.

OPENING OF THE INDIAN
AND COLONIAL EXHIBI-
TION BY THE QUEEN.

*Written at the Request of the Prince
of Wales.*

I.

WELCOME, welcome with one voice!
In your welfare we rejoice,
Sons and brothers that have sent,
From isle and cape and continent,
Produce of your field and flood,
Mount and mine, and primal wood;
Works of subtle brain and hand,
And splendors of the morning land,
Gifts from every British zone;
Britons, hold your own!

II.

May we find, as ages run,
The mother featured in the son;
And may yours for ever be
That old strength and constancy
Which has made your fathers great
In our ancient island State,
And wherever her flag fly,
Glorying between sea and sky,
Makes the might of Britain known;
Britons, hold your own!

III.

Britain fought her sons of yore—
Britain fail'd; and never more,
Careless of our growing kin,
Shall we sin our fathers' sin,
Men that in a narrower day—
Unprophetic rulers they—

Drove from out the mother's nest
That young eagle of the West
To forage for herself alone;
Britons, hold your own!

IV.

Sharers of our glorious past,
Brothers, must we part at last?
Shall we not thro' good and ill
Cleave to one another still?
Britain's myriad voices call,
'Sons, be welded each and all,
Into one imperial whole,
One with Britain, heart and soul
One life, one flag, one fleet, one
Throne!
Britons, hold your own!

POETS AND THEIR BIBLIO-
GRAPHIES.

OLD poets foster'd under friendlier
skies,
Old Virgil who would write ten
lines, they say,
At dawn, and lavish all the golden
day
To make them wealthier in his reader's
eyes;
And you, old popular Horace, you the
wise
Adviser of the nine-years-ponder'd
lay,
And you, that wear a wreath of
sweeter bay,
Catullus, whose dead songster never
dies;
If, glancing downward on the kindly
sphere
That once had roll'd you round and
round the Sun,
You see your Art still shrined in
human shelves,
You should be jubilant that you flour-
ished here
Before the Love of Letters, over-
done,
Had swamped the sacred poets with
themselves.

DEMETER

AND OTHER POEMS.

TO THE MARQUIS OF DUFFERIN AND AVA.

I.

At times our Britain cannot rest,
At times her steps are swift and rash;
She moving, at her girdle clash
The golden keys of East and West.

II.

Not swift or rash, when late she lent
The sceptres of her West, her East,
To one, that ruling has increased
Her greatness and her self-content.

III.

Your rule has made the people love
Their ruler. Your viceregal days
Have added fulness to the phrase
Of 'Gauntlet in the velvet glove.'

IV.

But since your name will grow with
Time,
Not all, as honoring your fair fame
Of Statesman, have I made the
name
A golden portal to my rhyme:

V.

But more, that you and yours may
know
From me and mine, how dear a debt
We owed you, and are owing yet
To you and yours, and still would owe.

VI.

For he—your India was his Fate,
And drew him over sea to you—
He fain had ranged her thro' and
thro',
To serve her myriads and the State,—

VII.

A soul that, watch'd from earliest
youth,

And on thro' many a brightening
year,
Had never swerved for craft or fear,
By one side-path, from simple truth;

VIII.

Who might have chased and claspt
Renown
And caught her chaplet here—and
there
In haunts of jungle-poison'd air
The flame of life went wavering down;

IX.

But ere he left your fatal shore,
And lay on that funeral boat,
Dying, 'Unspeakable' he wrote
'Their kindness,' and he wrote no
more;

X.

And sacred is the latest word;
And now the Was, the Might-have-
been,
And those lone rites I have not seen,
And one dream sound I have not
heard,

XI.

Are dreams that scarce will let me be,
Not there to bid my boy farewell,
When That within the coffin fell,
Fell—and flash'd into the Red Sea,

XII.

Beneath a hard Arabian moon,
And alien stars. To question, why
The sons before the fathers die,
Not mine! and I may meet him soon;

XIII.

But while my life's late eve endures,
Nor settles into hueless gray,
My memories of his briefer day
Will mix with love for you and yours.

ON THE JUBILEE OF QUEEN
VICTORIA.

I.

FIFTY times the rose has flower'd
and faded,
Fifty times the golden harvest fallen,
Since our Queen assumed the globe,
the sceptre.

II.

She beloved for a kindliness
Rare in Fable or History,
Queen, and Empress of India,
Crown'd so long with a diadem
Never worn by a worthier.
Now with prosperous auguries
Comes at last to the bounteous
Crowning year of her Jubilee.

III.

Nothing of the lawless, of the Despot,
Nothing of the vulgar, or vainglori-
ous,
All is gracious, gentle, great and
Queenly.

IV.

You then joyfully, all of you,
Set the mountain aflame to-night,
Shoot your stars to the firma-
ment,
Deck your houses, illuminate
All your towns for a festival,
And in each let a multitude
Loyal, each, to the heart of it,
One full voice of allegiance,
Hail the fair Ceremonial
Of this year of her Jubilee.

V.

Queen, as true to womanhood as
Queenhood,
Glorying in the glories of her people,
Sorrowing with the sorrows of the
lowest!

VI.

You, that wanton in affluence,
Spare not now to be bountiful,
Call your poor to regale with
you,
All the lowly, the destitute,
Make their neighborhood health-
fuller,
Give your gold to the Hospital,
Let the weary be comforted,
Let the needy be banqueted,
Let the maim'd in his heart
rejoice
At this glad Ceremonial,
And this year of her Jubilee.

VII.

Henry's fifty years are all in shadow,
Gray with distance Edward's fifty
summers,
Ev'n her Grandsire's fifty half forgot-
ten.

VIII.

You, the Patriot Architect,
You that shape for Eternity,
Raise a stately memorial,
Make it regally gorgeous,
Some Imperial Institute,
Rich in symbol, in ornament,
Which may speak to the centu-
ries,
All the centuries after us,
Of this great Ceremonial,
And this year of her Jubilee.

IX.

Fifty years of ever-broadening Com-
merce!
Fifty years of ever-brightening
Science!
Fifty years of ever-widening Empire!

X.

You, the Mighty, the Fortunate,
You, the Lord-territorial,
You, the Lord-manufacturer,
You, the hardy, laborious,
Patient children of Albion,
You, Canadian, Indian,

Australasian, African,
All your hearts be in harmony,
All your voices in unison,
Singing 'Hail to the glorious
Golden year of her Jubilee!'

XI.

Are there thunders moaning in the distance?
Are there spectres moving in the darkness?
Trust the Hand of Light will lead her people,
Till the thunders pass, the spectres vanish,
And the Light is Victor, and the darkness
Dawns into the Jubilee of the Ages.

TO PROFESSOR JEBB,

WITH THE FOLLOWING POEM.

FAIR things are slow to fade away,
Bear witness you, that yesterday¹
From out the Ghost of Pindar in you
Roll'd an Olympian; and they say²
That here the torpid mummy wheat
Of Egypt bore a grain as sweet
As that which gilds the glebe of England,
Sunn'd with a summer of milder heat.

So may this legend for awhile,
If greeted by your classic smile,
Tho' dead in its Trinacrian Enna,
Blossom again on a colder isle.

DEMETER AND PERSEPHONE.

(IN ENNA.)

FAINT as a climate-changing bird that flies
All night across the darkness, and at dawn

¹ In Bologna.

² They say, for the fact is doubtful.

Falls on the threshold of her native land,
And can no more, thou camest, O my child,
Led upward by the God of ghosts and dreams,
Who laid thee at Eleusis, dazed and dumb
With passing thro' at once from state to state,
Until I brought thee hither, that the day,
When here thy hands let fall the gather'd flower,
Might break thro' clouded memories once again
On thy lost self. A sudden nightingale
Saw thee, and flash'd into a frolic of song
And welcome; and a gleam as of the moon,
When first she peers along the tremulous deep,
Fled wavering o'er thy face, and chased away
That shadow of a likeness to the king
Of shadows, thy dark mate. Persephone!
Queen of the dead no more—my child! Thine eyes
Again were human-godlike, and the Sun
Burst from a swimming fleece of winter gray,
And robed thee in his day from head to feet—
'Mother!' and I was folded in thine arms.

Child, those imperial, disimpassion'd eyes
Awed even me at first, thy mother—eyes
That oft had seen the serpent-wanded power
Draw downward into Hades with his drift
Of flickering spectres, lighted from below
By the red race of fiery Phlegethon;
But when before have Gods or men beheld

The Life that had descended re-arise,
And lighted from above him by the
Sun?
So mighty was the mother's childless
cry,
A cry that rang thro' Hades, Earth,
and Heaven!

So in this pleasant vale we stand
again,
* The field of Enna, now once more
ablaze
With flowers that brighten as thy
footstep falls,
All flowers—but for one black blur of
earth
Left by that closing chasm, thro' which
the car
Of dark Aidoneus rising rapt thee
hence.
And here, my child, tho' folded in
thine arms,
I feel the deathless heart of mother-
hood
Within me shudder, lest the naked
glebe
Should yawn once more into the gulf,
and thence
The shrilly whinnings of the team of
Hell,
Ascending, pierce the glad and song-
ful air,
And all at once their arch'd necks, mid-
night-maned,
Jet upward thro' the mid-day blossom.
No!
For, see, thy foot has touch'd it; all
the space
Of blank earth-baldness clothes itself
afresh,
And breaks into the crocus-purple
hour
That saw thee vanish.

Child, when thou wert gone,
I envied human wives, and nested
birds,
Yea, the cubb'd lioness; went in
search of thee
Thro' many a palace, many a cot, and
gave
Thy breast to ailing infants in the
night,

And set the mother waking in amaze
To find her sick one whole; and forth
again
Among the wail of midnight winds,
and cried,
'Where is my loved one? Wherefore
do ye wail?'
And out from all the night an answer
shrill'd,
'We know not, and we know not why
we wail.'
I climb'd on all the cliffs of all the seas,
And ask'd the waves that moan about
the world
'Where? do ye make your moaning
for my child?'
And round from all the world the
voices came
'We know not, and we know not why
we moan.'
'Where?' and I stared from every
eagle-peak,
I thridded the black heart of all the
woods,
I peer'd thro' tomb and cave, and in
the storms
Of Autumn swept across the city, and
heard
The murmur of their temples chaunting
me,
Me, me, the desolate Mother!
'Where?'—and turn'd,
And fled by many a waste, forlorn of
man,
And grieved for man thro' all my grief
for thee,—
The jungle rooted in his shatter'd
hearth,
The serpent coil'd about his broken
shaft,
The scorpion crawling over naked
skulls;—
I saw the tiger in the ruin'd fane
Spring from his fallen God, but trace
of thee
I saw not; and far on, and, following
out
A league of labyrinthine darkness,
came
On three gray heads beneath a gleam-
ing rift.
'Where?' and I heard one voice from
all the three

'We know not, for we spin the lives of
men,
And not of Gods, and know not why
we spin!
There is a Fate beyond us.' Nothing
knew.

Last as the likeness of a dying man,
Without his knowledge, from him flits
to warn
A far-off friendship that he comes no
more,
So he, the God of dreams, who heard
my cry,
Drew from thyself the likeness of
thyself
Without thy knowledge, and thy
shadow past
Before me, crying 'The Bright one in
the highest
Is brother of the Dark one in the lowest,
And Bright and Dark have sworn that
I, the child
Of thee, the great Earth-Mother, thee,
the Power
That lifts her buried life from gloom
to bloom,
Should be for ever and for evermore
The Bride of Darkness.'

So the Shadow wail'd.
Then I, Earth-Goddess, cursed the
Gods of Heaven.
I would not mingle with their feasts;
to me
Their nectar smack'd of hemlock on
the lips,
Their rich ambrosia tasted aconite.
The man, that only lives and loves an
hour,
Seem'd nobler than their hard Eter-
nities.
My quick tears kill'd the flower, my
ravings hush'd
The bird, and lost in utter grief I fail'd
To send my life thro' olive-yard and
vine
And golden grain, my gift to helpless
man.
Rain-rotten died the wheat, the barley-
spears
Were hollow-husk'd, the leaf fell, and
the sun,

Pale at my grief, drew down before
his time
Sickening, and Ætna kept her winter
snow.

Then He, the brother of this Dark-
ness, He
Who still is highest, glancing from his
height
On earth a fruitless fallow, when he
miss'd
The wonted steam of sacrifice, the
praise
And prayer of men, decreed that thou
should'st dwell
For nine white moons of each whole
year with me,
Three dark ones in the shadow with
thy King.

Once more the reaper in the gleam
of dawn
Will see me by the landmark far
away,
Blessing his field, or seated in the
dusk
Of even, by the lonely threshing-floor,
Rejoicing in the harvest and the
grange.

Yet I, Earth-Goddess, am but ill-
content
With them, who still are highest.
Those gray heads,
What meant they by their 'Fate
beyond the Fates'
But younger kindlier Gods to bear us
down,
As we bore down the Gods before us?
Gods,
To quench, not hurl the thunderbolt,
to stay,
Not spread the plague, the famine;
Gods indeed,
To send the moon into the night and
break
The sunless halls of Hades into
Heaven?
Till thy dark lord accept and love
the Sun,
And all the Shadow die into the
Light,
When thou shalt dwell the whole
bright year with me,
And souls of men, who grew beyond
their race,

And made themselves as Gods against
the fear
Of Death and Hell; and thou that
hast from men,
As Queen of Death, that worship
which is Fear,
Henceforth, as having risen from out
the dead,
Shalt ever send thy life along with
mine
From buried grain thro' springing
blade, and bless
Their garner'd Autumn also, reap
with me,
Earth-mother, in the harvest hymns of
Earth
The worship which is Love, and see
no more
The Stone, the Wheel, the dimly-
glimmering lawns
Of that Elysium, all the hateful
fires
Of torment, and the shadowy warrior
glide
Along the silent field of Asphodel.

OWD ROÄ.¹

NAÄY, noä mander ² o' use to be callin' ³
'im Roä, Roä, Roä,
Fur the dog's stoän-deäf, an' e's blind,
'e can naither stan' nor goä.

But I meäns fur to maäke 'is owd aäge
as 'appy as iver I can,
Fur I oäws oäd Roäver moor nor I
iver oäwd mottal man.

Thou's rode of 'is back when a babby,
afor thou was gotten too owd,
Fur e'd fetch an' carry like owt, 'e
was allus as good as gowd.

Eh, but 'e'd fight wi' a will *when* 'e
fowt; 'e could howd ³ is oan,
An' Roä was the dog as knaw'd when
an' where to bury his boane.

¹ Old Rover. ² Manner. ³ Hold.

An' 'e kep his head hoop like a king,
an' 'e'd niver not down wi' 'is
taäl,
Fur 'e'd niver done nowt to be
ashaamed on, when we was i'
Howlaby Daäle.

An' 'e sarved me sa well when 'e
lived, that, Dick, when 'e cooms
to be deäd,
I thinks as I'd like fur to hev soom
soort of a sarvice reäd.

Fur 'e's moor good sense na the Parlia-
ment man 'at stans fur us 'ere,
An' I'd voät fur 'im, my oän sen, if 'e
could but stan fur the Shere.

' Faäithful an' ' True'—them words be
i' Scriptur—an' Faäithful an'
True
Ull be fun¹ upo' four short legs ten
times fur one upo' two.

An' maäybe they'll walk upo' two but
I knaws they runs upo' four ²—
Bedtime, Dicky! but waäit till tha 'eärs
it be strikin' the hour.

Fur I wants to tell tha o' Roä when
we lived i' Howlaby Daäle,
Ten year sin—Naäy—naäy! tha mun
nobbut hev' one glass of aäle.

Straänge an' owd-farran'd ³ the 'ouse,
an' belt⁴ long afor my daäy
Wi' haäfe o' the chimleys a-twizzen'd ⁵
an' twined like a band o' haäy.

The fellers as maäkes them picturs
'ud coom at the fall o' the year,
An' saddle their ends upo stools to
pictur the door-porch there,

An' the Heagle 'as hed two heäds
stannin' there o' the brokken
stick; ⁶

¹ Found. ² 'Ou' as in 'house.'

³ 'Owd-farran'd,' old-fashioned.

⁴ Built.

⁵ 'Twizzen'd,' twisted.

⁶ On a staff *ragulé*.

An' they niver 'ed seed sich ivin'¹ as
graw'd hall ower the brick;

An' theree i' the 'ouse one night—
but it's down, an' all on it now
Goan into mangles an' tonups,² an'
raäved slick thruf by the plow—

Theere, when the 'ouse wur a house,
one night I wur sittin' aloän,
Wi Koäver athurt my fecät, an'
sleeäpin still as a stoän,

Of a Christmas Eäve, an' as cowl'd as
this, an' the midders³ as white,
An' the fences all on 'em bolster'd oop
wi' the windle⁴ that night;

An' the cat wur a-sleeäpin alongside
Roäver, but I wur awaäke,
An' smoäkin' an' thinkin' o' things—
Doänt maäke thysen sick wi' the caäke.

Fur the men ater supper 'ed sung their
songs an' 'ed 'ed their beer,
An' 'ed goän their waäys; ther was
nobbut three, an' noän on 'em
theree.

They was all on 'em fear'd o' the
Ghoäst an' dussn't not sleeäp i'
the 'ouse,
But Dicky, the Ghoäst moästlins⁵ was
nobbut a rat or a mouse.

An' I loökt out wonst⁶ at the night,
an' the daäle was all of a thaw,
Fur I seed the beck coomin' down like
a long black snaäke i' the snaw,

An' I heärd greät heäps o' the snaw
slushin' down fro' the bank to
the beck,

An' then as I stood i' the doorwaäy, I
fecäld it drip o' my neck.

Saw I turn'd in ageän, an' I thowt o'
the good owd times 'at was
goan,
An' the munney they maäde by the
war, an' the times 'at was
coomin' on;

Fur I thowt if the Staäte was a gawin'
to let in furriners' wheät,
Howiver was British farmers to stan'
ageän o' their fecät.

Howiver was I fur to find my rent an'
to paäy my men?
An' all along o' the feller¹ as turn'd
'is back of hissen.

Thou slep i' the chamber above us,
we couldn't ha' 'eärd tha call,
Mooother 'ed tell'd ma to bring tha
down, an' thy craädle an' all;

Fur the gell o' the farm 'at slep wi'
tha then 'ed gotten wer leäve,
Fur to goä that night to 'er foälk by
cause o' the Christmas Eäve;

But I cleän forgot tha, my lad, when
Mooother 'ed gotten to bed.
An' I slep i' my chair hup-on-end, an'
the Freeä Traäde runn'd 'i my
'ead,

Till I dream'd 'at Squire walkt in, an'
I says to him 'Squire, ya're
laäte,
Then I seed at 'is faäce wur as red as
the Yule-block theer i' the
graäte.

An' 'e says 'can ya paäy me the rent
to-night?' an' I says to 'im
'Noä,'

An' 'e cotch'd howd hard o' my hairm²
'Then hout to-night tha shall
goä.'

'Tha'll niver,' says I, 'be a-turnin ma
hout upo' Christmas Eäve'?

Then I waäked an' I fun it was
Roäver a-tuggin' an' teärin' my
slicäve.

¹ Peel.

² Arm.

¹ Ivy.

² Mangolds and turnips.

³ Meadows. ⁴ Drifted snow.

⁵ Moästlins, for the most part, generally.

⁶ Once.

An' I thowt as 'e'd goän cleän-wud¹,
fur I noäwaäys know'd 'is
intent;

An' I says 'Git awaäy, ya beäst,' an' I
feicht 'im a kick an' 'e went.

Then 'e tumbled up stairs, fur I 'eärd
'im, as if 'e'd 'a brokken 'is
neck,

An' I'd cleär forgot, little Dicky, thy
chamber door wouldn't sneck;²

An' I slep' i' my chair ageän wi' my
hairm hingin' down to the floor,
An' I thowt it was Roäver a-tuggin' an'
teärin' me wuss nor afoor,

An' I thowt 'at I kick'd 'im ageän,
but I kick'd thy Moother
istead.

'What arta snorin' theree fur? the
house is afire,' she said.

Thy Moother 'ed beän a-naggin about
the gell o' the farm,

She offens 'ud spy summut wrong
when there warn't not a mossel
o' harm;

An' she didn't not solidly meän I wur
gawin' that waäy to the bad,
Fur the gell³ was as howry a trollope
as iver traäpes'd i' the squad.

But Moother was free of 'er tongue, as
I offens 'ev tell'd 'er mysen,
Sa I kep i' my chair, fur I thowt she
was nobbut a-rilin' ma then.

An' I says 'I'd be good to tha, Bess, if
tha'd onywaäys let ma be good,'
But she skelpt ma haäfe ower i' the
chair, an' screeäd like a Ilowl
gone wud⁴—

¹ Mad.

² Latch.

³ The girl was as dirty a slut as ever
trudged in the mud, but there is a sense of
slatterholiness in 'traäpes'd' which is not
expressed in 'trudged.'

⁴ She half overturned me and shrieked
like an owl gone mad.

'Ya mum run fur the leather.¹ Git
oop, if ya're onywaäys good for
owt.'

And I says 'If I beänt noäwaäys—not
nowadaäys—good fur nowt—

Yit I beänt sich a Nowt² of all Nowts
as 'ull hallus do as 'e's bid.'

'But the stairs is afire,' she said; then
I seed 'er a-cryin', I did.

An' she beäld 'Ya mun saäve little
Dick, an' be sharp about it an'
all,'

Sa I runs to the yard fur a lether, an'
sets 'im ageän the wall,

An' I claums an' I mashes the winder
hin, when I gits to the top,
But the heat druv hout i' my heyes till
I feäld mysen ready to drop.

Thy Moother was howdin' the lether,
an' tellin' me not to be skeärd,
An' I wasn't afeärd, or I thinks leäst-
waäys as I wasn't afeärd;

But I couldn't see fur the smoäke
wheere thou was a-liggin, my
lad,

An' Roäver was theree i' the chaum-
ber a-yowlin' an' yaupin' like
mad;

An' thou was a-beälan' likewise, an' a-
squeälin', as if tha was bit,
An' it wasn't a bite but a burn, fur the
merk's³ o' thy shou'der yit;

Then I call'd out Roä, Roä, Roä, thaw
I didn't haäfe think as 'e'd 'ear,
But 'e coom'd thruf the fire wi' my
buirn i' 'is mouth to the winder
theree!

He coom'd like a Hangel o' marcy as
soon as 'e 'eärd 'is naäme,
Or like tother Hangel i' Scriptur 'at
summun seed i' the flaäme,

¹ Ladder. ² A thoroughly insignifi-
cant or worthless person. ³ Mark.

When summun 'ed hax'd fur a son, an
'e promised a son to she,
An' Roä was as good as the Hangel i'
saävin' a son fur me.

Sa I browt tha down, an' I says' 'I
mun gaw up ageän fur Roä.'
'Gaw up ageän fur the varmint?' I
toll'd 'er 'Yes I mun goä.'

An' I claub'd up ageän to the winder,
än' clemm'd¹ owd Roä by the
'eäd,
An' 'is 'air coom'd off i' my 'ands an'
I taäked 'im at fust fur dcäd;

Fur 'e smell'd like a herse a-singein',
an' seem'd as blind as a poop,
An' haäfe on 'im bare as a bublin'.²
I couldn't wakken 'im oop,

But I browt 'im down, an' we got to
the barn, fur the barn wouldn't
burn
Wi' the wind blawin' hard tother waäy,
an' the wind wasn't like to turn.

An' I kep a-callin' o' Roä till 'e wag-
gled 'is taäil fur a bit,
But the cocks kep a-crawin' an'
crawin' all night, an' I 'ears 'em
yit;

An' the dogs was a-yowlin' all round,
and thou was a-squeälin' thyssen,
An' Moother was naggin' an' groänin'
an' moänun' an' naggin' ageän;

An' I 'eärd the bricks an' the baulks³
rummle down when the roof
gev waäy,
Fur the fire was a-raägin' an' raävin'
an' roarin' like judgment daäy.

Warm enew there sewer-ly, but the
barn was as cowl as owt,
An' we cuddled and huddled together,
an' happt⁴ wersens oop as we
mowt.

¹ Clutched.

² 'Bubbling,' a young unfledged bird.

³ Beams. ⁴ Wrapt ourselves.

An' I browt Roä round, but Moother
'ed bean sa soäk'd wi' the thaw
'At she cotch'd 'er death o' cowl that
night, poor soul, i' the straw.

Haäfe o' the parish runn'd oop when
the rigtree¹ was tummlin' in—
Too laäte—but it's all ower now—hall
hower—an' ten year sin;

Too laäte, tha mun git tha to bed, but
I'll coom an' I'll squench the
light,
Fur we moät 'ev naw moor fires—and
soa little Dick, good-night.

VASTNESS.

I.

MANY a hearth upon our dark globe
sighs after many a vanish'd
face,
Many a planet by many a sun may roll
with the dust of a vanish'd race.

II.

Raving politics, never at rest—as this
poor earth's pale history runs,—
What is it all but a trouble of ants in
the gleam of a million million
of suns?

III.

Lies upon this side, lies upon that side,
truthless violence mourn'd by
the Wise,
Thousands of voices drowning his own
in a popular torrent of lies upon
lies;

IV.

Stately purposes, valor in battle, glori-
ous annals of army and fleet,
Death for the right cause, death for the
wrong cause, trumpets of victory,
groans of defeat;

¹ The beam that runs along the roof of
the house just beneath the ridge.

V.

Innocence seethed in her mother's
milk, and Charity setting the
martyr aflame;
Thralldom who walks with the ban-
ner of Freedom, and recks not
to ruin a realm in her name.

VI.

Faith at her zenith, or all but lost in
the gloom of doubts that darken
the schools;
Craft with a bunch of all-heal in her
hand, follow'd up by her vassal
legion of fools;

VII.

Trade flying over a thousand seas with
her spice and her vintage, her
silk and her corn;
Desolate offing, sailorless harbors,
famishing populace, wharves
forlorn;

VIII.

Star of the morning, Hope in, the sun-
rise; gloom of the evening, Life
at a close;
Pleasure who flaunts on her wide
downway with her flying robe
and her poison'd rose;

IX.

Pain, that has crawl'd from the corpse
of Pleasure, a worm which
writhes all day, and at night
Stirs up again in the heart of the
sleeper, and stings him back to
the curse of the light;

X.

Wealth with his wines and his wedded
harlots; honest Poverty, bare
to the bone;
Opulent Avarice, lean as Poverty;
Flattery gilding the rift in a
throne;

XI.

Fame blowing out from her golden
trumpet a jubilant challenge to
Time and to Fate;
Slander, her shadow, sowing the nettle
on all the laurel'd graves of
the Great;

XII.

Love for the maiden, crown'd with
marriage, no regrets for aught
that has been,
Household happiness, gracious chil-
dren, debtless competence,
golden mean;

XIII.

National hatreds of whole genera-
tions, and pigmy spites of the
village spire;
Vows that will last to the last death-
ruckle, and vows that are snapt
in a moment of fire;

XIV.

He that has lived for the lust of the
minute, and died in the doing
it, flesh without mind;
He that has nail'd all flesh to the
Cross, till Self died out in the
love of his kind;

XV.

Spring and Summer and Autumn and
Winter, and all these old
revolutions of earth;
All new-old revolutions of Empire—
change of the tide—what is all
of it worth?

XVI.

What the philosophies, all the sci-
ences, poesy, varying voices of
prayer?
All that is noblest, all that is basest,
all that is filthy with all that is
fair?

XVII.

What is it all, if we all of us end but
in being our own corpse-coffins
at last,
Swallow'd in Vastness, lost in Silence,
drown'd in the deeps of a
meaningless Past?

XVIII.

What but a murmur of gnats in the
gloom, or a moment's anger of
bees in their hive?—

* * * *

Peace, let it be! for I loved him, and
love him for ever: the dead are
not dead but alive.

Dedicated to the
Hon. J. Russell Lowell.

THE RING.

MIRIAM AND HER FATHER.

Miriam (singing).

MELLOW moon of heaven,
Bright in blue,
Moon of married hearts,
Hear me, you!

Twelve times in the year
Bring me bliss,
Globing Honey Moons
Bright as this.

Moon, you fade at times
From the night.
Young again you grow
Out of sight.

Silver crescent-curve,
Coming soon,
Globe again, and make
Honey Moon.

Shall not my love last,
Moon, with you,
For ten thousand years
Old and new?

Father. And who was he with
such love-drunken eyes
They made a thousand honey moons
of one?

Miriam. The prophet of his own,
my Hubert—his
The words, and mine the setting.
'Air and Words,'
Said Hubert, when I sang the song,
'are bride
And bridegroom.' Does it please
you?

Father. Mainly, child,
Because I hear your Mother's voice
in yours.

She—, why, you shiver tho' the
wind is west
With all the warmth of summer.

Miriam. Well, I felt
On a sudden I know not what, a
breath that past
With all the cold of winter.

Father (muttering to himself).
Even so.

The Ghost in Man, the Ghost that
once was Man,
But cannot wholly free itself from
Man,
Are calling to each other thro' a
dawn
Stranger than earth has ever seen;
the veil

Is rending, and the Voices of the day
Are heard across the Voices of the
dark.

No sudden heaven, nor sudden hell,
for man,
But thro' the Will of One who knows
and rules—
And utter knowledge is but utter
love—

Æonian Evolution, swift or slow,
Thro' all the Spheres—an ever open-
ing height,

An ever lessening earth—and she
perhaps,
My Miriam, breaks her latest earthly
link

With me to-day.

Miriam. You speak so low, what
is it?
Your 'Miriam breaks'—is making a
new link

Breaking an old one?

Father. No, for we, my child,
Have been till now each other's all-in-
all.

Miriam. And you the lifelong
guardian of the child.

Father. I, and one other whom
you have not known.

Miriam. And who? what other?

Father. Whither are you bound?
For Naples which we only left in May?

Miriam. No! father, Spain, but
Hubert brings me home
With April and the swallow. Wish
me joy!

Father. What need to wish when
Hubert weds in you
The heart of Love, and you the soul
of Truth

In Hubert?

Miriam. Tho' you used to call me
once

The lonely maiden-Princess of the
wood,
Who meant to sleep her hundred
summers out

Before a kiss should wake her.

Father. Ay, but now
Vour fairy Prince has found you, take
this ring.

Miriam. 'To t'amo'—and these
diamonds—beautiful!
'From Walter,' and for me from you
then?

Father. Well,
One way for Miriam.

Miriam. Miriam am I not?

Father. This ring bequeath'd you
by your mother, child,
Was to be given you—such her dying
wish—

Given on the morning when you came
of age

Or on the day you married. Both the
days

Now close in one. The ring is doubly
yours.

Why do you look so gravely at the
tower?

Miriam. I never saw it yet so all
ablaze

With creepers crimsoning to the pin-
nacles,

As if perpetual sunset linger'd there,
And all ablaze too in the lake below!
And how the birds that circle round
the tower

Are cheeping to each other of their
flight

To summer lands!

Father. And that has made you
grave?

Fly—care not. Birds and brides
must leave the nest.

Child, I am happier in your happiness
Than in my own.

Miriam. It is not that!

Father. What else?

Miriam. That chamber in the
tower.

Father. What chamber, child?
Your nurse is here?

Miriam. My Mother's nurse and
mine.

She comes to dress me in my bridal
veil.

Father. What did she say?

Miriam. She said, that you and I
Had been abroad for my poor health
so long

She fear'd I had forgotten her, and I
ask'd

About my Mother, and she said, 'Thy
hair

Is golden like thy Mother's, not so
fine.'

Father. What then? what more?

Miriam. She said—perhaps indeed
She wander'd, having wander'd now
so far

Beyond the common date of death—
that you,

When I was smaller than the statuette
Of my dear Mother on your bracket
here—

You took me to that chamber in the
tower,

The topmost—a chest there, by which
you knelt—

And there were books and dresses—
left to me,

A ring too which you kiss'd, and I, she
said,

I babbled, Mother, Mother—as I used
To prattle to her picture—stretch'd
my hands

As if I saw her; then a woman came
And caught me from my nurse. I
hear her yet—

A sound of anger like a distant storm.

Father. Garrulous old crone.

Miriam. Poor nurse!

Father. I bad her keep,
Like a seal'd book, all mention of the
ring,

For I myself would tell you all to-day.

Miriam. 'She too might speak to-
day,' she mumbled. Still,

I scarce have learnt the title of your
book,

But you will turn the pages.

Father. Ay, to-day!

I brought you to that chamber on your
third

September birthday with your nurse,
and felt

An icy breath play on me, while I
stooped

To take and kiss the ring.

Miriam. This very ring
Io t'amo?

Father. Yes, for some wild hope
was mine

That, in the misery of my married life,
Miriam your Mother might appear to
me.

She came to you, not me. The storm,
you hear

Far-off, is Muriel—your step-mother's
voice.

Miriam. Vext, that you thought
my Mother came to me?

Or at my crying 'Mother?' or to find
My Mother's diamonds hidden from
her there,

Like worldly beauties in the Cell, not
shown

To dazzle all that see them?

Father. Wait a while.

Your Mother and step-mother—Mir-
iam Erne

And Muriel Erne—the two were cous-
ins—lived

With Muriel's mother on the down,
that sees

A thousand squares of corn and
meadow, far

As the gray deep, a landscape which
your eyes

Have many a time ranged over when
a babe.

Miriam. I climb'd the hill with
Hubert yesterday,

And from the thousand squares, one
silent voice

Came on the wind, and seem'd to say
'Again.'

We saw far off an old forsaken house,
Then home, and past the ruin'd mill.

Father. And there
I found these cousins often by the

brook,
For Miriam sketch'd and Muriel threw

the fly;
The girls of equal age, but one was fair,

And one was dark, and both were
beautiful.

No voice for either spoke within my
heart

Then, for the surface eye, that only
doats

On outward beauty, glancing from the
one

To the other, knew not that which
pleased it most.

The raven ringlet or the gold; but
both

Were dowerless, and myself, I used to
walk

This Terrace—morbid, melancholy;
mine

And yet not mine the hall, the farm,
the field;

For all that ample woodland whisper'd
'debt,'

The brook that feeds this lakelet mur-
mur'd 'debt,'

And in yon arching avenue of old elms,
Tho' mine, not mine, I heard the sober

rook
And carrion crow cry 'Mortgage.'

Miriam. Father's fault
Visited on the children!

Father. Ay, but then
A kinsman, dying, summon'd me to

Rome—
He left me wealth—and while I jour-
ney'd hence,

And saw the world fly by me like a
dream,

And while I communed with my
truest self,

I woke to all of truest in myself,
Till, in the gleam of those mid-sum-
mer dawns,
The form of Muriel faded, and the
face

Of Miriam grew upon me, till I knew ;
And past and future mix'd in Heaven
and made

The rosy twilight of a perfect day.

Miriam. So glad? no tear for him,
who left you wealth,
Your kinsman?

Father. I had seen the man but
once;

He loved my name not me; and then
I pass'd

Home, and thro' Venice, where a jew-
eller,

So far gone down, or so far up in life,
That he was nearing his own hundred,
sold

This ring to me, then laugh'd 'the
ring is weird.'

And weird and worn and wizard-like
was he.

'Why weird?' I ask'd him; and he
said 'The souls

Of two repentant Lovers guard the
ring;'

Then with a ribald twinkle in his
bleak eyes—

'And if you give the ring to any maid,
They still remember what it cost them
here,

And bind the maid to love you by the
ring;

And if the ring were stolen from the
maid,

The theft were death or madness to
the thief,

So sacred those Ghost Lovers hold
the gift.'

And then he told their legend:

'Long ago
Two lovers parted by a scurrilous tale
Had quarrell'd, till the man repenting
sent

This ring "Io t'amo" to his best be-
loved,

And sent it on her birthday. She in
wrath

Return'd it on her birthday, and that
day

His death-day, when, half-frenzied by
the ring,
He wildly fought a rival suitor, him
The causer of that scandal, fought and
fell;

And she that came to part them all too
late,

And found a corpse and silence, drew
the ring

From his dead finger, wore it till her
death,

Shrined him within the temple of her
heart,

Made every moment of her after life
A virgin victim to his memory,

And dying rose, and rear'd her arms,
and cried

"I see him, Io t'amo, Io t'amo."

Miriam. Legend or true? so ten-
der should be true!

Did he believe it? did you ask him?

Father. Ay!

But that half skeleton, like a barren
ghost

From out the fleshless world of spirits,
laugh'd:

A hollow laughter!

Miriam. Vile, so near the ghost
Himself, to laugh at love in death!

But you?

Father. Well, as the bygone lover
thro this ring

Had sent his cry for her forgiveness, I
Would call thro' this 'Io t'amo' to the
heart

Of Miriam; then I bad the man en-
grave

'From Walter' on the ring, and send
it—wrote

Name, surname, all as clear as noon,
but he—

Some younger hand must have
engraven the ring—

His fingers were so stiffen'd by the
frost

Of seven and ninety winters, that he
scrawl'd

A 'Miriam' that might seem a
'Muriel';

And Muriel claim'd and open'd what I
meant

For Miriam, took the ring, and
flaunted it

Before that other whom I loved and love.

A mountain stay'd me here, a minster there,

A galleried palace, or a battlefield,
Where stood the sheaf of Peace: but—
coming home—

And on your Mother's birthday—all
but yours—

A week betwixt—and when the tower
as now

Was all ablaze with crimson to the
roof,

And all ablaze too plunging in the
lake

If head-foremost—who were those that
stood between

The tower and that rich phantom of
the tower?

Muriel and Miriam, each in white, and
like

May-blossoms in mid autumn—was it
they?

A light shot upward on them from the
lake.

What sparkled there? whose hand
was that? they stood

So close together. I am not keen of
sight,

But coming nearer—Muriel had the
ring—

'O Miriam! have you given your ring
to her?

O Miriam! Miriam reddened, Miriam
clench'd

The hand that wore it, till I cried
again:

'O Miriam, if you love me take the
ring!'

She glanced at me, at Muriel, and was
mute.

'Nay, if you cannot love me, let it be.'
Then—Muriel standing ever statue-
like—

She turn'd, and in her soft imperial
way

And saying gently: 'Muriel, by your
leave.'

Unclosed the hand, and from it drew
the ring,

And gave it me, who pass'd it down
her own,

'Io t'amo, all is well then.' Muriel fled.

Miriam. Poor Muriel!

Father. Ay, poor Muriel

when you hear

What follows! Miriam loved me
from the first,

Not thro' the ring; but on her
marriage-morn

This birthday, death-day, and be-
trothal ring,

Laid on her table overnight, was gone;

And after hours of search and doubt
and threats,

And hubbub, Muriel enter'd with it,
'See!—

Found in a chink of that old moulder'd
floor!'

My Miriam nodded with a pitying
smile,

As who should say 'that those who
lose can find.'

Then I and she were married for a
year,

One year without a storm, or even a
cloud;

And you my Miriam born within the
year;

And she my Miriam dead within the
year.

I sat beside her dying, and she
gaspt:

'The books, the miniature, the lace
are hers,

My ring too when she comes of age, or
when

She marries; you—you loved me,
kept your word.

You love me still "Io t'amo."—
Muriel—no—

She cannot love; she loves her own
hard self,

Her firm will, her fix'd purpose. Pro-
mise me,

Miriam not Muriel—she shall have
the ring.'

And there the light of other life, which
lives

Beyond our burial and our buried eyes,
Glean'd for a moment in her own on
earth.

I swore the vow, then with my latest
kiss

Upon them, closed her eyes, which
would not close,

But kept their watch upon the ring
and you.
Your birthday was her death-day.

Miriam. O poor Mother!
And you, poor desolate Father, and
poor me,

The little senseless, worthless, word-
less babe,
Saved when your life was wreck'd!

Father. Desolate? yes!
Desolate as that sailor, whom the
storm

Had parted from his comrade in the
boat,

And dash'd half dead on barren sands,
was I.

Nay, you were my one solace; only—
you

Were always ailing. Muriel's mother
sent,

And sure am I, by Muriel, one day
came

And saw you, shook her head, and
patted yours,

And smiled, and making with a kindly
pinch

Each poor pale cheek a momentary
rose—

'That should be fix'd,' she said; 'your
pretty bud,

So blighted here, would flower into
full health

Among our heath and bracken. Let
her come!

And we will feed her with our moun-
tain air,

And send her home to you rejoicing.'
No—

We could not part. And once, when
you my girl

Rode on my shoulder home—the tiny
fist

Had graspt a daisy from your Mother's
grave—

By the lych-gate was Muriel. 'Ay,'
she said,

'Among the tombs in this damp vale
of yours!

You scorn my Mother's warning, but
the child

Is paler than before. We often walk
in open sun, and see beneath our

feet

The mist of autumn gather from your
lake,

And shroud the tower; and once we
only saw

Your gilded vane, a light above the
mist'—

(Our old bright bird that still is veer-
ing there

Above his four gold letters) 'and the
light,'

She said, 'was like that light'—and
there she paused,

And long, till I believing that the
girl's

Lean fancy, groping for it, could not
find

One likeness, laugh'd a little and found
her two—

'A warrior's crest above the cloud of
war'—

'A fiery phoenix rising from the smoke,
The pyre he burnt in.'—'Nay,' she

said, 'the light
That glimmers on the marsh and on

the grave.'

And spoke no more, but turn'd and
pass'd away.

Miriam, I am not surely one of those
Caught by the flower that closes on

the fly,
But after ten slow weeks her fix'd

intent,
In aiming at an all but hopeless mark

To strike it, struck; I took, I left you
there;

I came, I went, was happier day by
day;

For Muriel nursed you with a mother's
care;

Till on that clear and heather-scented
height

The rounder cheek had brighten'd into
bloom.

She always came to meet me carrying
you,

And all her talk was of the babe she
loved;

So, following her old pastime of the
brook,

She threw the fly for me; but oftener
left

That angling to the mother. 'Muriel's
health

Had weaken'd, nursing little Miriam.
 Strange!
 She used to shun the wailing babe,
 and doats
 On this of yours.' But when the
 matron saw
 That hinted love was only wasted bait,
 Not risen to, she was bolder. 'Ever
 since
 You sent the fatal ring'—I told her
 'sent
 To Miriam,' 'Doubtless—ay, but ever
 since
 In all the world my dear one sees but
 you—
 In your sweet babe she finds but you
 —she makes
 Her heart a mirror that reflects but
 you.'
 And then the tear fell, the voice
 broke. *Her* heart!
 I gazed into the mirror, as a man
 Who sees his face in water, and a
 stone,
 That glances from the bottom of the
 pool,
 Strike upward thro' the shadow; yet
 at last,
 Gratitude—loneliness—desire to keep
 So skilled a nurse about you always—
 nay!
 Some half remorseful kind of pity
 too—
 Well! well, you know I married
 Muriel Erne.
 'I take thee Muriel for my wedded
 wife'—
 I had forgotten it was your birthday,
 child—
 When all at once with some electric
 thrill
 A cold air pass'd between us, and the
 hands
 Fell from each other, and were join'd
 again.
 No second cloudless honeymoon
 was mine.
 For by and by she sicken'd of the
 farce,
 She dropt the gracious mask of
 motherhood,
 She came no more to meet me, carry-
 ing you,

Nor ever cared to set you on her knee,
 Nor ever let you gambol in her sight,
 Nor ever cheer'd you with a kindly
 smile,
 Nor ever ceased to clamor for the
 ring;
 Why had I sent the ring at first to her?
 Why had I made her love me thro'
 the ring,
 And then had changed? so fickle are
 men—the best!
 Not she—but now my love was hers
 again,
 The ring by right, she said, was hers
 again.
 At times too shrilling in her angrier
 moods,
 'That weak and watery nature love
 you? No!
 "*Io t'amo, Io t'amo*"!' flung herself
 Against my heart, but often while her
 lips
 Were warm upon my cheek, an icy
 breath,
 As from the grating of a sepulchre.
 Past over both. I told her of my
 vow,
 No pliable idiot I to break my vow;
 But still she made her outcry for the
 ring;
 For one monotonous fancy madden'd
 her,
 Till I myself was madden'd with her
 cry,
 And even that '*Io t'amo*,' those three
 sweet
 Italian words, became a weariness.
 My people too were scared with
 eerie sounds,
 A footstep, a low throbbing in the
 walls,
 A noise of falling weights that never
 fell,
 Weird whispers, bells that rang with-
 out a hand,
 Door-handles turn'd when none was
 at the door,
 And bolted doors that open'd of them-
 selves:
 And one betwixt the dark and light
 had seen
Her, bending by the cradle of her
 babe.

Miriam. And I remember once
that being waked
By noises in the house—and, no one
near—

I cried for nurse, and felt a gentle
hand
Fall on my forehead, and a sudden
face

Look'd in upon me like a gleam and
pass'd,
And I was quieted, and slept again.
Or is it some half memory of a
dream?

Father. Your fifth September
birthday.

Miriam. And the face,
The hand,—my Mother.

Father. *Miriam*, on that day
Two lovers parted by no scurrilous
tale—

Mere want of gold—and still for
twenty years

Bound by the golden cord of their
first love—

Had ask'd us to their marriage, and to
share

Their marriage-banquet. *Muriel*,
paler then

Than ever you were in your cradle,
moan'd,

'I am fitter for my bed, or for my
grave,

I cannot go, go you.' And then she
rose,

She clung to me with such a hard
embrace,

So lingeringly long, that half-amazed
I parted from her, and I went alone.

And when the 'bridegroom murmur'd,
'With this ring,'

I felt for what I could not find, the key,
The guardian of her relics, of *her* ring.

I kept it as a sacred amulet

About me,—gone! and gone in that
embrace!

Then, hurrying home, I found her not
in house

Or garden—up the tower—an icy air
Fled by me.—There, the chest was
open—all

The sacred relics tost about the floor—
Among them *Muriel* lying on her
face—

I raised her, call'd her 'Muriel, *Muriel*
wake!'

The fatal ring lay near her; the glazed
eye

Glared at me as in horror. Dead! I
took

And chafed the freezing hand. A red
mark ran

All round one finger pointed straight,
the rest

Were crumpled inwards. Dead!—
and maybe stung

With some remorse, had stolen, worn
the ring—

Then torn it from her finger, or as
if—

For never had I seen her show re-
morse—

As if—

Miriam. —those two Ghost lov-
ers—

Father. Lovers yet—

Miriam. Yes, yes!

Father. —but dead so long, gone
up so far,

That now their ever-rising life has
dwarf'd

Or lost the moment of their past on
earth,

As we forget our wail at being born.

As if—

Miriam. a dearer ghost had—

Father. —wrench'd it away.

Miriam. Had floated in with sad
reproachful eyes,

Till from her own hand she had torn
the ring

In fright, and fallen dead. And I
myself

Am half afraid to wear it.

Father. Well, no more!

No bridal music this! but fear not
you!

You have the ring she guarded; that
poor link

With earth is broken, and has left her
free,

Except that, still drawn downward for
an hour,

Her spirit hovering by the church,
where she

Was married too, may linger, till she
sees

Her maiden coming like a Queen,
 who leaves
 Some colder province in the North to
 gain
 Her capital city, where the loyal bells
 Clash welcome—linger, till her own,
 the babe
 She lean'd to from her Spiritual
 sphere,
 Her lonely maiden-Princess, crown'd
 with flowers,
 Has enter'd on the larger woman-
 world
 Of wives and mothers.

But the bridal veil—
 Your nurse is waiting. Kiss me child
 and go.

FORLORN.

I.

'He is fled—I wish him dead—
 He that wrought my ruin—
 O the flattery and the craft
 Which were my undoing . . .
 In the night, in the night,
 When the storms are blowing.

II.

'Who was witness of the crime?
 Who shall now reveal it?
 He is fled, or he is dead,
 Marriage will conceal it . . .
 In the night, in the night,
 While the gloom is growing.'

III.

Catherine, Catherine, in the night,
 What is this you're dreaming?
 There is laughter down in Hell
 At your simple scheming . . .
 In the night, in the night,
 When the ghosts are fleeing.

IV.

You to place a hand in his
 Like an honest woman's,
 You that lie with wasted lungs

Waiting for your summons . . .
 In the night, O the night!
 O the deathwatch beating!

V.

There will come a witness soon
 Hard to be confuted,
 All the world will hear a voice
 Scream you are polluted . . .
 In the night! O the night,
 When the owls are wailing!

VI.

Shame and marriage, Shame and
 marriage,
 Fright and foul dissembling,
 Bantering bridesman, reddening
 priest,
 Tower and altar trembling . . .
 In the night, O the night,
 When the mind is failing!

VII.

Mother, dare you kill your child?
 How your hand is shaking!
 Daughter of the seed of Cain,
 What is this you're taking? . . .
 In the night, O the night,
 While the house is sleeping.

VIII.

Dreadful! has it come to this,
 O unhappy creature?
 You that would not tread on a worm
 For your gentle nature . . .
 In the night, O the night,
 O the night of weeping!

IX.

Murder would not veil your sin,
 Marriage will not hide it,
 Earth and Hell will brand your
 name,
 Wretch you must abide it . . .
 In the night, O the night,
 Long before the dawning.

X.

Up, get up, and tell him all,
 Tell him you were lying!

Do not die with a lie in your mouth,
You that know you're dying . . .
In the night, O the night,
While the grave is yawning.

XI.

No—you will not die before,
Tho' you'll ne'er be stronger;
You will live till *that* is born,
Then a little longer . . .
In the night, O the night,
While the Fiend is prowling.

XII.

Death and marriage, Death and
marriage!
Funeral hearses rolling!
Black with bridal favors mixt!
Bridal bells with tolling! . . .
In the night, O the night,
When the wolves are howling.

XIII.

Up, get up, the time is short,
Tell him now or never!
Tell him all before you die.
Lest you die for ever . . .
In the night, O the night,
Where there's no forgetting.

XIV.

Up she got, and wrote him all,
All her tale of sadness,
Blister'd every word with tears,
And eased her heart of mad-
ness . . .
In the night, and nigh the dawn,
And while the moon was setting.

HAPPY.

THE LEPER'S BRIDE.

I.

WHY wail you, pretty plover? and
what is it that you fear?
Is he sick your mate like mine?
have you lost him, is he fled?

And there—the heron rises from his
watch beside the mere,
And flies above the leper's hut,
where lives the living-dead.

II.

Come back, nor let me know it!
would he live and die alone?
And has he not forgiven me yet,
his over-jealous bride,
Who am, and was, and will be his,
his own and only own,
To share his living death with him,
die with him side by side?

III.

Is that the leper's hut on the solitary
moor,
Where noble Ulric dwells forlorn,
and wears the leper's weed?
The door is open. He! is he stand-
ing at the door,
My soldier of the Cross? it is he
and he indeed!

IV.

My roses—will he take them *now*—
mine, his—from off the tree
We planted both together, happy
in our marriage morn?
O God, I could blaspheme, for he
fought Thy fight for Thee,
And Thou hast made him leper to
compass him with scorn—

V.

Hast spared the flesh of thousands,
the coward and the base,
And set a crueller mark than Cain's
on him, the good and brave!
He sees me, waves me from him. I
will front him face to face.
You need not wave me from you.
I would leap into your grave.

* * * *

VI.

My warrior of the Holy Cross and of
the conquering sword,

The roses that you cast aside—once
more I bring you these.
No nearer? do you scorn me when
you tell me, O my lord,
You would not mar the beauty of
your bride with your disease.

VII.

You say your body is so foul—then
here I stand apart,
Who yearn to lay my loving head
upon your leprous breast.
The leper plague may scale my skin
but never taint my heart;
Your body is not foul to me, and
body is foul at best.

VIII.

I loved you first when young and fair,
but now I love you most;
The fairest flesh at last is filth on
which the worm will feast;
This poor rib-grated dungeon of the
holy human ghost,
This house with all its hateful needs
no cleaner than the beast,

IX.

This coarse diseased creature which
in Eden was divine,
This Satan-haunted ruin, this little
city of sewers,
This wall of solid flesh that comes be-
tween your soul and mine,
Will vanish and give place to the
beauty that endures,

X.

The beauty that endures on the Spirit-
ual height,
When we shall stand transfigured,
like Christ on Hermon hill,
And moving each to music, soul in soul
and light in light,
Shall flash thro' one another in a
moment as we will.

XI.

Foul! foul! the word was yours not
mine, I worship that right hand

Which fell'd the foes before you as
the woodman fells the wood,
And sway'd the sword that lighten'd
back the sun of Holy land,
And clove the Moslem crescent
moon, and changed it into blood.

XII.

And once I worshipt all too well this
creature of decay,
For Age will chink the face, and
Death will freeze the supplest
limbs—
Yet you in your mid manhood—O the
grief when yesterday
They bore the Cross before you to
the chant of funeral hymns.

XIII.

'Libera me, Domine!' you sang the
Psalm, and when
The Priest pronounced you dead,
and flung the mould upon your
feet,
A beauty came upon your face, not
that of living men,
But seen upon the silent brow when
life has ceased to beat.

XIV.

'Libera nos, Domine'—you knew not
one was there
Who saw you kneel beside your bier,
and weeping scarce could see;
May I come a little nearer, I that heard,
and changed the prayer
And sang the married 'nos' for the
solitary 'me.'

XV.

My beauty marred by you? by you!
so be it. All is well
If I lose it and myself in the higher
beauty, yours.
My beauty lured that falcon from his
eyry on the fell,
Who never caught one gleam of the
beauty which endures—

XVI.

The Count who sought to snap the
bond that link'd us life to life,
Who whisper'd me 'your Ulric
loves '—a little nearer still—
He hiss'd, 'Let us revenge ourselves,
your Ulric woos my wife '—
A lie by which he thought he could
subdue me to his will.

XVII.

I knew that you were near me when I
let him kiss my brow;
Did he touch me on the lips? I was
jealous, anger'd, vain,
And I meant to make *you* jealous.
Are you jealous of me now?
Your pardon, O my love, if I ever
gave you pain.

XVIII.

You never once accused me, but I
wept alone, and sigh'd
In the winter of the Present for the
summer of the Past;
That icy winter silence—how it froze
you from your bride,
Tho' I made one barren effort to
break it at the last.

XIX.

I brought you, you remember, these
roses, when I knew
You were parting for the war, and
you took them tho' you frown'd;
You frown'd and yet you kiss'd them.
All at once the trumpet blew,
And you spurr'd your fiery horse,
and you hurl'd them to the
ground.

XX.

You parted for the Holy War without
a word to me,
And clear myself unask'd—not I.
My nature was too proud.
And him I saw but once again, and far
away was he,
When I was praying in a storm—the
crash was long and loud—

XXI.

That God would ever slant His bolt
from falling on your head—
Then I lifted up my eyes, he was
coming down the fell—
I clapt my hands. The sudden fire
from Heaven had dash'd him
dead,
And sent him charr'd and blasted
to the deathless fire of Hell.

XXII.

See, I sinn'd but for a moment. I re-
pent and repent,
And trust myself forgiven by the
God to whom I kneel.
A little nearer? Yes. I shall hardly
be content
Till I be leper like yourself, my love,
from head to heel.

XXIII.

O foolish dreams, that you, that I,
would slight our marriage oath:
I held you at that moment even
dearer than before;
Now God has made you leper in His
loving care for both,
That we might cling together, never
doubt each other more.

XXIV.

The Priest, who join'd you to the dead,
has join'd our hands of old;
If man and wife be but one flesh, let
mine be leprous too,
As dead from all the human race as if
beneath the mould;
If you be dead, then I am dead, who
only live for you.

XXV.

Would Earth tho' hid in cloud not be
follow'd by the Moon?
The leech forsake the dying bed for
terror of his life?
The shadow leave the Substance in the
brooding light of noon?
Or if I had been the leper would
you have left the wife?

XXVI.

Not take them? Still you wave me off
—poor roses—must I go—
I have worn them year by year—
from the bush we both had set—
What? fling them to you?—well—that
were hardly gracious. No!
Your plague but passes by the touch.
A little nearer yet!

XVII.

There, there! he buried you, the
Priest; the Priest is not to
blame,
He joins us once again, to his either
office true:
I thank him. I am happy, happy.
Kiss me. In the name
(Of the everlasting God, I will live
and die with you.

[DEAN MILMAN has remarked that the protection and care afforded by the Church to this blighted race of lepers was among the most beautiful of its offices during the Middle Ages. The leprosy of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was supposed to be a legacy of the crusades, but was in all probability the offspring of meagre and unwholesome diet, miserable lodging and clothing, physical and moral degradation. The services of the Church in the seclusion of these unhappy sufferers were most affecting. The stern duty of looking to the public welfare is tempered with exquisite compassion for the victims of this loathsome disease. The ritual for the sequestration of the leprosy differed little from the burial service. After the leper had been sprinkled with holy water, the priest conducted him into the church, the leper singing the psalm 'Libera me domine,' and the crucifix and hearer going before. In the church a black cloth was stretched over two trestles in front of the altar, and the leper leaning at its side devoutly beard mass. The priest, taking up a little earth in his cloak, threw it on one of the leper's feet, and put him out of the church, if it did not rain too heavily; took him to his hut in the midst of the fields, and then uttered the prohibitions: 'I forbid you entering the church

... or entering the company of others. I forbid you quitting your home without your leper's dress.' He concluded: 'Take this dress, and wear it in token of humility; take these gloves, take this clapper, as a sign that you are forbidden to speak to any one. You are not to be indignant at being thus separated from others, and as to your little wants, good people will provide for you, and God will not desert you.' Then in this old ritual follow these sad words: 'When it shall come to pass that the leper shall pass out of this world, he shall be buried in his hut, and not in the churchyard.' At first there was a doubt whether wives should follow their husbands who had been leprosy, or remain in the world and marry again. The church decided that the marriage-tie was indissoluble, and so bestowed on these unhappy beings this immense source of consolation. With a love stronger than this living death, lepers were followed into banishment from the haunts of men by their faithful wives. Readers of Sir J. Stephen's *Essays on Ecclesiastical Biography* will recollect the description of the founder of the Franciscan order, how, controlling his involuntary disgust, St. Francis of Assisi washed the feet and dressed the sores of the lepers, once at least reverently applying his lips to their wounds.—BOUCHER-JAMES.]

This ceremony of *quasi-burial* varied considerably at different times and in different places. In some cases a grave was dug, and the leper's face was often covered during the service.

TO ULYSSES.¹

I.

ULYSSES, much-experienced man,
Whose eyes have known this
globe of ours,
Her tribes of men, and trees, and
flowers,
From Corrientes to Japan,

¹ 'Ulysses,' the title of a number of essays by W. G. Palgrave. He died at Monte Video before seeing my poem.

II.

To you that bask below the Line,
I soaking here in winter wet—
The century's three strong eights
have met
To drag me down to seventy-nine

III.

In summer if I reach my day—
To you, yet young, who breathe the
balm
Of summer-winters by the palm
And orange grove of Paraguay,

IV.

I tolerant of the colder time,
Who love the winter woods, to trace
On paler heavens the branching
grace
Of leafless elm, or naked lime,

V.

And see my cedar green, and there
My giant ilex keeping leaf
When frost is keen and days are
brief—
Or marvel how in English air

VI.

My yucca, which no winter quells,
Altho' the months have scarce
begun,
Has push'd toward our faintest sun
A spike of half-accomplish'd bells—

VII.

Or watch the waving pine which here
The warrior of Caprera set,¹
A name that earth will not forget
Till earth has roll'd her latest year—

VIII.

I, once half-crazed for larger light
On broader zones beyond the foam,
But chaining fancy now at home
Among the quarried downs of Wight,

¹ Garibaldi said to me, alluding to his barren island, 'I wish I had your trees.'

IX.

Not less would yield full thanks to you
For your rich gift, your tale of lands
I know not,¹ your Arabian sands;
Your cane, your palm, tree-fern, bam-
boo,

X.

The wealth of tropic bower and brake;
Your Oriental Eden-isles,²
Where man, nor only Nature smiles;
Your wonder of the boiling lake;³

XI.

Phra-Chai, the Shadow of the Best,⁴
Phra-bat⁵ the step; your Pontic
coast;
Crag-cloister;⁶ Anatolian Ghost;⁷
Hong-Kong,⁸ Karnac,⁹ and all the
rest.

XII.

Thro' which I follow'd line by line
Your leading hand, and came, my
friend,
To prize your various book, and
send
A gift of slenderer value, mine.

TO MARY BOYLE.

WITH THE FOLLOWING POEM.

I.

'SPRING-FLOWERS'! While you still
delay to take
Your leave of Town,

¹ The tale of Nejd. ² The Philippines.

³ In Dominica.

⁴ The shadow of the Lord. Certain obscure markings on a rock in Siam, which express the image of Buddha to the Buddhist more or less distinctly according to his faith and his moral worth.

⁵ The footstep of the Lord on another rock. ⁶ The monastery of Sumelas.

⁷ Anatolian Spectre stories.

⁸ The Three Cities. ⁹ Travels in Egypt.

Our elm tree's ruddy-hearted blossom-
flake
Is fluttering down.

II.

Be truer to your promise. There! I
heard

Our cuckoo call.
Be needle to the magnet of your word,
Nor wait, till all

III.

Our vernal bloom from every vale and
plain
And garden pass,
And all the gold from each laburnum
chain
Drop to the grass.

IV.

Is memory with your Marian gone to
rest,
Dead with the dead?
For ere she left us, when we met, you
prest
My hand, and said

V.

'I come with your spring-flowers.
You came not, friend;
My birds would sing,
You heard not. Take then this spring-
flower I send,
This song of spring,

VI.

Found yesterday—forgotten mine own
rhyme
By mine old self,
As I shall be forgotten by old Time,
Laid on the shelf—

VII.

A rhyme that flower'd betwixt the
whitening sloe
And kingcup blaze,
And more than half a hundred years
ago,
In rick-fire days,

VIII.

When Dives loathed the times, and
paced his land
In fear of worse,
And sanguine Lazarus felt a vacant
hand
Fill with *his* purse.

IX.

For lowly minds were madden'd to
the height
By tonguester tricks,
And once—I well remember that red
night
When thirty ricks,

X.

All flaming, made an English home-
stead Hell—
These hands of mine
Have helpt to pass a bucket from the
well
Along the line,

XI.

When this bare dome had not begun
to glean
Thro' youthful curls,
And you were then a lover's fairy
dream,
His girl of girls;

XII.

And you, that now are lonely, and with
Grief
Sit face to face.
Might find a flickering glimmer of
relief
In change of place.

XIII.

What use to brood? this life of
mingled pains
And joys to me,
Despite of every Faith and Creed,
remains
The Mystery.

XIV.

Let golden youth bewail the friend,
the wife,
For ever gone.
He dreams of that long walk thro'
desert life
Without the one.

XV.

The silver year should cease to mourn
and sigh—
Not long to wait—
So close are we, dear Mary, you and I
To that dim gate.

XVI.

Take, read! and be the faults your
Poet makes
Or many or few,
He rests content, if his young music
wakes
A wish in you

XVII.

To change our dark Queen-city, all
her realm
Of sound and smoke,
For his clear heaven, and these few
lanes of elm
And whispering oak.

THE PROGRESS OF SPRING.

I.

THE groundflame of the crocus breaks
the mould,
Fair Spring slides hither o'er the
Southern sea,
Wavers on her thin stem the snow-
drop cold
That trembles not to kisses of the
bee:
Come, Spring, for now from all the
dripping eaves
The spear of ice has wept itself
away,
And hour by hour unfolding woodbine
leaves

O'er his uncertain shadow droops
the day.
She comes! The loosen'd rivulets
run;
The frost-bead melts upon her
golden hair;
Her mantle, slowly greening in the
Sun,
Now wraps her close, now arching
leaves her bare
To breaths of balmier air;

II.

Up leaps the lark, gone wild to wel-
come her,
About her glance the tits, and shriek
the jays,
Before her skims the jubilant wood-
pecker,
The linnet's bosom blushes at her
gaze,
While round her brows a woodland
culver flits,
Watching her large light eyes and
gracious looks,
And in her open palm a halcyon sits
Patient—the secret splendor of the
brooks.
Come, Spring! She comes on waste
and wood,
On farm and field: but enter also
here,
Diffuse thyself at will thro' all my
blood,
And, tho' thy violet sicken into sere,
Lodge with me all the year!

III.

Once more a downy drift against the
brakes,
Self-darken'd in the sky, descending
slow!
But gladly see I thro' the wavering
flakes
Yon blanching apricot like snow in
snow.
These will thine eyes not brook in
forest-paths,
On their perpetual pine, nor round
the beech;
They fuse themselves to little spicy
baths,

Solved in the tender blushes of the peach;
They lose themselves and die
On that new life that gems the hawthorn line;
Thy gay lent-lilies wave and put them by,
And out once more in varnish'd glory shine
Thy stars of celandine.

IV.

She floats across the hamlet. Heaven lours,
But in the tearful splendor of her smiles
I see the slowly-thickening chestnut towers
Fill out the spaces by the barren tiles.
Now past her feet the swallow circling flies,
A clamorous cuckoo stoops to meet her hand;
Her light makes rainbows in my closing eyes,
I hear a charm of song thro' all the land.
Come, Spring! She comes, and Earth is glad
To roll her North below thy deepening dome,
But ere thy maiden birk be wholly clad,
And these low bushes dip their twigs in foam,
Make all true hearths thy home.

V.

Across my garden! and the thicket stirs,
The fountain pulses high in sunnier jets,
The blackcap warbles, and the turtle purrs,
The starling claps his tiny castanets.
Still round her forehead wheels the woodland dove,
And scatters on her throat the sparks of dew,
The kingcup fills her footprint, and above

Broaden the glowing isles of vernal blue.
Hail ample presence of a Queen,
Bountiful, beautiful, apparell'd gay,
Whose mantle, every shade of glancing green,
Flies back in fragrant breezes to display
A tunic white as May!

VI.

She whispers, 'From the South I bring you balm,
For on a tropic mountain was I born,
While some dark dweller by the coconut palm
Watch'd my far meadow zoned with airy morn;
From under rose a muffled moan of floods;
I sat beneath a solitude of snow;
There no one came, the turf was fresh, the woods
Plunged gulf on gulf thro' all their vales below.
I saw beyond their silent tops
The steaming marshes of the scarlet cranes,
The slant seas leaning on the mangrove copse,
And summer basking in the sultry plains
About a land of canes;

VII.

'Then from my vapor girdle soaring forth
I scaled the buoyant highway of the birds,
And drank the dews and drizzle of the North,
That I might mix with men, and hear their words
On pathway'd plains; for—while my hand exults
Within the bloodless heart of lowly flowers
To work old laws of Love to fresh results,
Thro' manifold effect of simple powers—

I too would teach the man
 Beyond the darker hour to see the
 bright,
 That his fresh life may close as it
 began,
 The still-fulfilling promise of a
 light
 Narrowing the bounds of night.'

VIII.

So wed thee with my soul, that I may
 mark
 The coming year's great good and
 varied ills,
 And new developments, whatever
 spark
 Be struck from out the clash of
 warring wills;
 Or whether, since our nature cannot
 rest,
 The smoke of war's volcano burst
 again
 From hoary deeps that belt the
 changeful West,
 Old Empires, dwellings of the kings
 of men;
 Or should those fail, that hold the
 helm,
 While the long day of knowledge
 grows and warms,
 And in the heart of this most ancient
 realm
 A hateful voice be utter'd, and
 alarms
 Sounding 'To arms! to arms!'

IX.

A simpler, saner lesson might he
 learn
 Who reads thy gradual process,
 Holy Spring,
 Thy leaves possess the season in
 their turn,
 And in their time thy warblers rise
 on wing.
 How surely glidest thou from March
 to May,
 And changest, breathing it, the
 sullen wind,
 Thy scope of operation, day by day,
 Larger and fuller, like the human
 mind!

Thy warmths from bud to bud
 Accomplish that blind model in the
 seed,
 And men have hopes, which race the
 restless blood,
 That after many changes may suc-
 ceed
 Life, which is Life indeed.

MERLIN AND THE GLEAM.

I.

O YOUNG Mariner,
 You from the haven
 Under the sea-cliff,
 You that are watching
 The gray Magician
 With eyes of wonder,
 I am Merlin,
 And I am dying,
 I am Merlin
 Who follow The Gleam.

II.

Mighty the Wizard
 Who found me at sunrise
 Sleeping, and woke me
 And learn'd me Magic!
 Great the Master,
 And sweet the Magic,
 When over the valley,
 In early summers,
 Over the mountain,
 On human faces,
 And all around me,
 Moving to melody,
 Floated The Gleam.

III.

Once at the croak of a Raven
 who crost it,
 A barbarous people,
 Blind to the magic,
 And deaf to the melody,
 Snarl'd at and curs'd me.
 A demon vext me,
 The light retreated,
 The landskip darken'd,
 The melody deaden'd,
 The Master whisper'd
 'Follow The Gleam.'

IV.

Then to the melody,
Over a wilderness
Gliding, and glancing at
Elf of the woodland,
Gnome of the cavern,
Griffin and Giant,
And dancing of Fairies
In desolate hollows,
And wraiths of the mountain,
And rolling of dragons
By warble of water,
Or cataract music
Of falling torrents,
Flitted The Gleam.

V.

Down from the mountain
And over the level,
And streaming and shining on
Silent river,
Silvery willow,
Pasture and plowland,
Innocent maidens,
Garrulous children,
Homestead and harvest,
Reaper and gleaner,
And rough-ruddy faces
Of lowly labor,
Slided The Gleam—

VI.

Then, with a melody
Stronger and statelier,
Led me at length
To the city and palace
Of Arthur the king;
Touch'd at the golden
Cross of the churches
Flash'd on the Tournament,
Flicker'd and bicker'd
From helmet to helmet,
And last on the forehead
Of Arthur the blameless
Rested The Gleam.

VII.

Clouds and darkness
Closed upon Camelot;
Arthur had vanish'd
I knew not whither,

The king who loved me,
And cannot die;
For out of the darkness
Silent and slowly
The Gleam, that had waned to
a wintry glimmer
On icy fallow
And faded forest,
Drew to the valley
Named of the shadow,
And slowly brightening
Out of the glimmer,
And slowly moving again to a
melody
Yearningly tender,
Fell on the shadow,
No longer a shadow,
But clothed with The Gleam.

VIII.

And broader and brighter
The Gleam flying onward,
Wed to the melody,
Sang thro' the world;
And slower and fainter,
Old and weary,
But eager to follow,
I saw, whenever
In passing it glanced upon
Hamlet or city,
That under the Crosses
The dead man's garden,
The mortal hillock,
Would break into blossom;
And so to the land's
Last limit I came—
And can no longer,
But die rejoicing,
For thro' the Magic
Of Him the Mighty,
Who taught me in childhood,
There on the border
Of boundless Ocean,
And all but in Heaven
Hovers The Gleam.

IX.

Not of the sunlight,
Not of the moonlight,
Not of the starlight!
O young Mariner,
Down to the haven,

Call your companions,
Launch your vessel,
And crowd your canvas,
And, ere it vanishes
Over the margin,
After it, follow it,
Follow The Gleam.

ROMNEY'S REMORSE.

'I READ Hayley's Life of Romney the other day—Romney wanted but education and reading to make him a very fine painter; but his ideal was not high nor fixed. How touching is the close of his life! He married at nineteen, and because Sir Joshua and others had said that "marriage spoilt an artist" almost immediately left his wife in the North and scarce saw her till the end of his life; when old, nearly mad and quite desolate, he went back to her and she received him and nursed him till he died. This quiet act of hers is worth all Romney's pictures! even as a matter of Art, I am sure.' (*Letters and Literary Remains of Edward Fitzgerald*, vol. i.)

'BEAT, little heart—I give you this
and this'

Who are you? What! the Lady
Hamilton?

Good, I am never weary painting you.
To sit once more? Cassandra, Hebe,
Joan,

Or spinning at your wheel beside the
vine—

Bacchante, what you will; and if I
fail

To conjure and concentrate into form
And color all you are, the fault is less
In me than Art. What Artist ever
yet

Could make pure light live on the
canvas? Art!

Why should I so disrelish that short
word?

Where am I? snow on all the hills!
so hot,

So fever'd! never colt would more
delight

To roll himself in meadow grass than
I

To wallow in that winter of the hills.

Nurse, were you hired? or came of
your own will

To wait on one so broken, so forlorn?
Have I not met you somewhere long
ago?

I am all but sure I have—in Kendal
church—

O yes! I hired you for a season there,
And then we parted; but you look so
kind

That you will not deny my sultry
throat

One draught of icy water. There—
you spill

The drops upon my forehead. Your
hand shakes.

I am ashamed. I am a trouble to
you,

Could kneel for your forgiveness.
Are they tears?

For me—they do me too much grace
—for me?

O Mary, Mary!

Vexing you with words!
Words only, born of fever, or the
fumes

Of that dark opiate dose you gave me,
—words,

Wild babble. I have stumbled back
again

Into the common day, the sounder
self.

God stay me there, if only for your
sake,

The truest, kindest, noblest-hearted
wife

That ever wore a Christian marriage-
ring.

My curse upon the Master's apo-
thegm,

That wife and children drag an Artist
down!

This seem'd my lodestar in the
Heaven of Art,

And lured me from the household fire
on earth.

To you my days have been a life-long
lie,

Grafted on half a truth; and tho' you
say . . .

'Take comfort you have won the
Painter's fame,'
The best in me that sees the worst in
me,
And groans to see it, finds no comfort
there.

What fame? I am not Raphaël,
Titian—no
Nor even a Sir Joshua, some will cry.
Wrong there! The painter's fame?
but mine, that grew
Blown into glittering by the popular
breath,
May float awhile beneath the sun, may
roll
The rainbow hues of heaven about
it—

There!
The color'd bubble bursts above the
abyss
Of Darkness, utter Lethe.

Is it so?
Her sad eyes plead for my own fame
with me
To make it dearer.

Look, the sun has risen
To flame along another dreary day.
Your hand. How bright you keep
your marriage-ring!
Raise me. I thank you.

Has your opiate then
Bred this black mood? or am I
conscious, more
Than other Masters, of the chasm
between
Work and Ideal? Or does the gloom
of Age
And suffering cloud the height I
stand upon
Even from myself? stand? stood . . .
no more.

And yet
The world would lose, if such a wife
as you
Should vanish unrecorded. Might I
crave
One favor? I am bankrupt of all
claim
On your obedience, and my strongest
wish

Falls flat before your least unwilling-
ness.
Still would you—if it please you—sit
to me?

I dream'd last night of that clear
summer noon,
When seated on a rock, and foot to
foot
With your own shadow in the placid
lake,
You claspt our infant daughter, heart
to heart.

I had been among the hills, and
brought you down
A length of staghorn-moss, and this
you twined

About her cap. I see the picture yet,
Mother and child. A sound from far
away,
No louder than a bee among the
flowers,

A fall of water lull'd the noon asleep.
You still'd it for the moment with a
song

Which often echo'd in me, while I
stood
Before the great Madonna-master-
pieces

Of ancient Art in Paris, or in Rome.
Mary, my crayons! if I can, I will.
You should have been—I might have
made you once,

Had I but known you as I know you
now—

The true Alcestis of the time. Your
song—
Sit, listen! I remember it, a proof
That I—even I—at times remember'd
you.

'Beat upon mine, little heart! beat,
beat!

Beat upon mine! you are mine, my
sweet!

All mine from your pretty blue
eyes to your feet,

My sweet.'

Less profile! turn to me—three-quar-
ter face.

'Sleep, little blossom, my honey,
my bliss!

For I give you this, and I give you
this!

And I blind your pretty blue eyes
with a kiss!

Sleep!

Too early blinded by the kiss of
death—

'Father and Mother will watch you
grow!—

You watch'd not I, she did not grow,
she died.

'Father and Mother will watch you
grow,
And gather the roses whenever
they blow,
And find the white heather wher-
ever you go,

My sweet.'

Ah, my white heather only blooms in
heaven

With Milton's amaranth. There,
there, there! a child

Had shamed me at it—Down, you idle
tools,

Stamp'd into dust—tremulous, all
awry,

Blurr'd like a landskip in a ruffled
pool,—

Not one stroke firm. This Art, that
harlot-like

Seduced me from you, leaves me har-
lot-like,

Who love her still, and whimper, im-
potent

To win her back before I die—and
then—

Then, in the loud world's bastard
judgment-day,

One truth will damn me with the
mindless mob,

Who feel no touch of my temptation,
more

Than all the myriad lies, that blacken
round

The corpse of every man that gains a
name;

'This model husband, this fine
Artist'! Fool,

What matters? Six foot deep of
burial mould

Will dull their comments! Ay, but
when the shout

Of His descending peals from Heaven,
and throbs

Thro' earth, and all her graves, if *He*
should ask

'Why left you wife and children? for
my sake,

According to my word?' and I
replied

'Nay, Lord, for *Art*,' why, that would
sound so mean

That all the dead, who wait the doom
of Hell

For bolder sins than mine, adulteries,
Wife-murders,—nay, the ruthless

Mussulman
Who flings his bowstrung Harem in
the sea,

Would turn, and glare at me, and
point and jeer,

And gibber at the worm, who, living,
made

The wife of wives a widow-bride, and
lost

Salvation for a sketch.

I am wild again!

The coals of fire you heap upon my
head

Have crazed me. Someone knock-
ing there without?

No! Will my Indian brother come?
to find

Me or my coffin? Should I know the
man?

This worn-out Reason dying in her
house

May leave the windows blinded, and
if so,

Bid him farewell for me, and tell
him—

Hope!

I hear a death-bed Angel whisper
'Hope.'

"The miserable have no medicine
But only Hope!" He said it . . .

in the play.

His crime was of the senses; of the
mund

Mine; worse, cold, calculated.

Tell my son—

O let me lean my head upon your
breast.
'Beat little heart' on this fool brain
of mine.
I once had friends—and many—none
like you.
I love you more than when we mar-
ried. Hope!
O yes, I hope, or fancy that, per-
haps,
Human forgiveness touches heaven,
and thence—
For you forgive me, you are sure of
that—
Reflected, sends a light on the for-
given.

PARNASSUS.

Exegi monumentum . . .

Quod non . . .

Possit diruere . . .

. . . innumerabilis

Annorum series et fuga temporum.—

HORACE.

I.

WHAT be those crown'd forms high
over the sacred fountain?
Bards, that the mighty Muses have
raised to the heights of the
mountain,
And over the flight of the Ages! O
Goddesses, help me up thither!
Lightning may shrivel the laurel of
Cæsar, but mine would not
wither.
Steep is the mountain, but you, you
will help me to overcome it,
And stand with my head in the
zenith, and roll my voice from
the summit,
Sounding for ever and ever thro'
Earth and her listening na-
tions,
And mixt with the great Sphere-
music of stars and of constella-
tions.

II.

What be those two shapes high over
the sacred fountain,
Taller than all the Muses, and huger
than all the mountain?
On those two known peaks they stand
ever spreading and heighten-
ing;
Poet, that evergreen laurel is blasted
by more than lightning!
Look, in their deep double shadow
the crown'd ones all disappear-
ing!
Sing like a bird and be happy, nor
hope for a deathless hearing!
'Sounding for ever and ever?' pass
on! the sight confuses—
These are Astronomy and Geology,
terrible Muses!

III.

If the lips were touch'd with fire from
off a pure Pierian altar,
Tho' their music here be mortal need
the singer greatly care?
Other songs for other worlds! the fire
within him would not falter;
Let the golden Iliad vanish, Homer
here is Homer there.

BY AN EVOLUTIONIST.

THE Lord let the house of a brute to
the soul of a man,
And the man said 'Am I your
debtor?'
And the Lord—'Not yet: but make
it as clean as you can,
And then I will let you a better.'

I.

If my body come from brutes, my
soul uncertain, or a fable,
Why not bask amid the senses
while the sun of morning
shines,
I, the finer brute rejoicing in my
hounds, and in my stable,
Youth and Health, and birth and
wealth, and choice of women
and of wines?

II.

What hast thou done for me, grim
Old Age, save breaking my
bones on the rack?

Would I had past in the morning
that looks so bright from afar!

OLD AGE.

Done for thee? starved the wild
beast that was linkt with thee
eighty years back.

Less weight now for the ladder-of-
heaven that hangs on a star.

I.

If my body come from brutes, tho'
somewhat finer than their own,
I am heir, and this my kingdom.
Shall the royal voice be mute?

No, but if the rebel subject seek to
drag me from the throne,

Hold the sceptre, Human Soul, and
rule thy Province of the brute.

II.

I have climb'd to the snows of Age,
and I gaze at a field in the
Past,

Where I sank with the body at
times in the sloughs of a low
desire,

But I hear no yelp of the beast, and
the Man is quiet at last

As he stands on the heights of his
life with a glimpse of a height
that is higher.

FAR—FAR—AWAY.

(FOR MUSIC.)

WHAT sight so lured him thro' the
fields he knew

As where earth's green stole into
heaven's own hue,

Far—far—away?

What sound was dearest in his na-
tive dells?

The mellow lin-lan-lone of evening
bells

Far—far—away.

What vague world-whisper, mystic
pain or joy,

Thro' those three words would haunt
him when a boy,

Far—far—away?

A whisper from his dawn of life? a
breath

From some fair dawn beyond the
doors of death

Far—far—away?

Far, far, how far? from o'er the gates
of Birth,

The faint horizons, all the bounds of
earth,

Far—far—away?

What charm in words, a charm no
words could give?

O dying words, can Music make you
live

Far—far—away?

POLITICS.

WE move, the wheel must always
move,

Nor always on the plain,

And if we move to such a goal

As Wisdom hopes to gain,

Then you that drive, and know your
Craft,

Will firmly hold the rein,

Nor lend an ear to random cries,

Or you may drive in vain,

For some cry 'Quick' and some cry
'Slow'

But, while the hills remain,

Up hill 'Too-slow' will need the
whip,

Down hill 'Too-quick,' the chain.

BEAUTIFUL CITY.

BEAUTIFUL city, the centre and crater
of European confusion,

O you with your passionate shriek for
the rights of an equal human-
ity,
How often your Re-volution has
proven but E-volution
Roll'd again back on itself in the tides
of a civic insanity!

THE ROSES ON THE
TERRACE.

ROSE, on this terrace fifty years ago,
When I was in my June, you in
your May,
Two words, 'My Rose' set all your
face aglow,
And now that I am white, and you
are gray,
That blush of fifty years ago, my
dear,
Blooms in the Past, but close to me
to-day
As this red rose, which on our terrace
here
Glows in the blue of fifty miles
away.

THE PLAY.

ACT first, this Earth, a stage so
gloom'd with woe
You all but sicken at the shifting
scenes.
And yet be patient. Our Playwright
may show
In some fifth Act what this wild
Drama means.

ON ONE WHO AFFECTED AN
EFFEMINATE MANNER.

WHILE man and woman still are in-
complete,
I prize that soul where man and
woman meet,
Which types all Nature's male and
female plan,
But, friend, man-woman is not woman-
man.

TO ONE WHO RAN DOWN
THE ENGLISH.

You make our faults too gross, and
thence maintain
Our darker future. May your fears
be vain!
At times the small black fly upon the
pane
May seem the black ox of the distant
plain.

THE SNOWDROP.

MANY, many welcomes
February fair-maid,
Ever as of old time,
Solitary firstling,
Coming in the cold time,
Prophet of the gay time,
Prophet of the May time,
Prophet of the roses,
Many, many welcomes
February fair-maid!

THE THROSTLE.

'SUMMER is coming, summer is com-
ing.
I know it, I know it, I know it.
Light again, leaf again, life again, love
again,'
Yes, my wild little Poet.

Sing the new year in under the blue.
Last year you sang it as gladly.
'New, new, new, new'! Is it then so
new
That you should carol so madly?

'Love again, song again, nest again,
young again,'
Never a prophet so crazy!
And hardly a daisy as yet, little
friend,
See, there is hardly a 'daisy.

'Here again, here, here, here, happy
year!'

O warble unhidden, unbidden!
 Summer is coming, is coming, my
 dear,
 And all the winters are hidden.

THE OAK.

LIVE thy Life,
 Young and old,
 Like yon oak,
 Bright in spring,
 Living gold;

Summer-rich
 Then; and then
 Autumn-changed,
 Soberer-hued
 Gold again.

All his leaves
 Fall'n at length,
 Look, he stands,
 Trunk and bough,
 Naked strength.

IN MEMORIAM.

W. G. WARD.

FAREWELL, whose like on earth I
 shall not find,
 Whose Faith and Work were bells
 of full accord,

My friend, the most unworldly of
 mankind,
 Most generous of all Ultramon-
 tanes, Ward,
 How subtle at tierce and quart of
 mind with mind,
 How loyal in the following of thy
 Lord!

CROSSING THE BAR.

SUNSET and evening star,
 And one clear call for me!
 And may there be no moaning of the
 bar,
 When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems
 asleep,
 Too full for sound and foam,
 When that which drew from out the
 boundless deep
 Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
 And after that the dark!
 And may there be no sadness of fare-
 well,
 When I embark;

For tho' from out our bourne of Time
 and Place
 The flood may bear me far,
 I hope to see my Pilot face to face
 When I have crost the bar.

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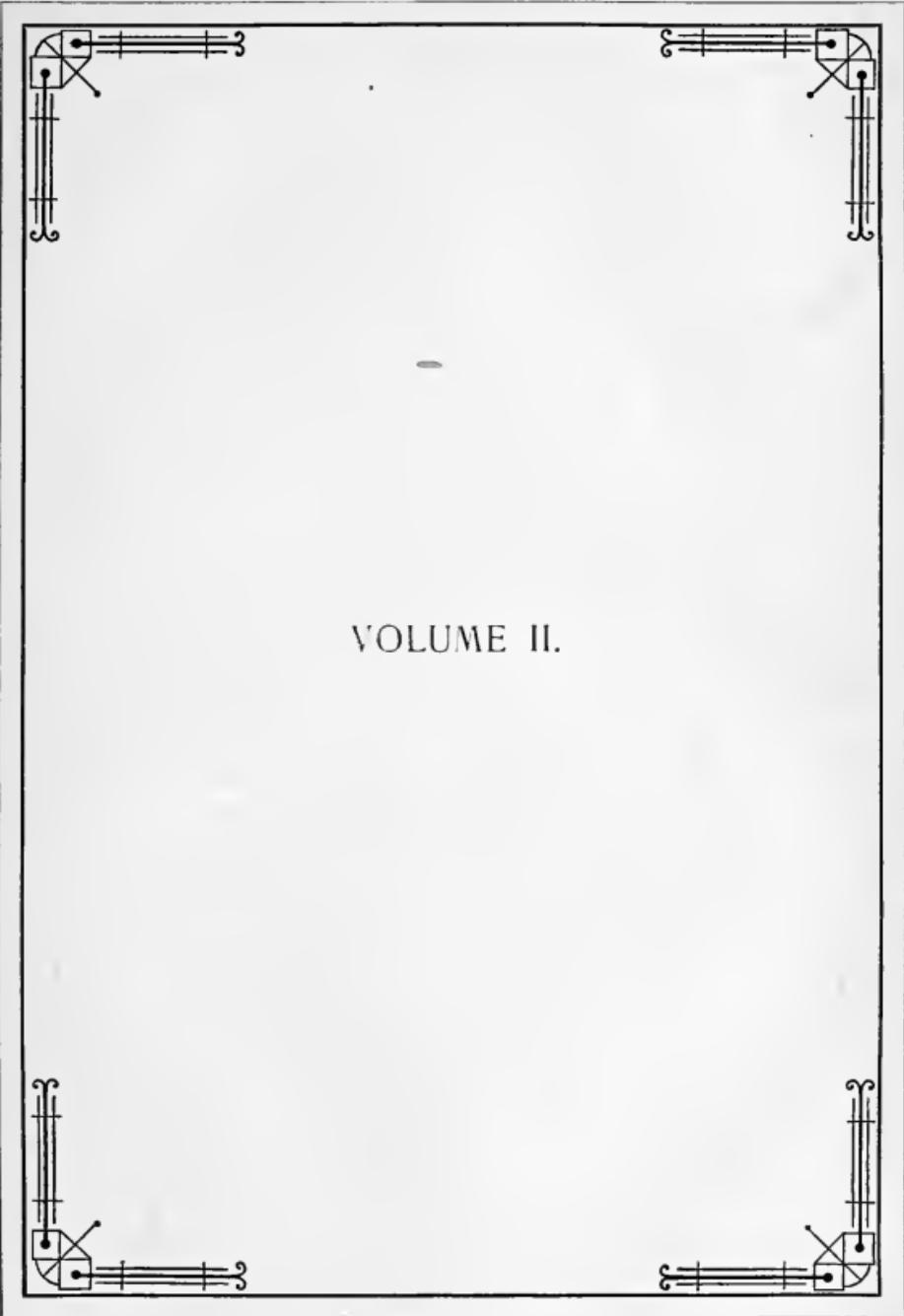
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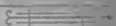
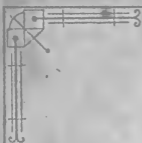
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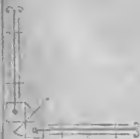
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VOLUME II.



LOPME II



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THE LADY OF SHALOTT

AND OTHER POEMS.

THE LADY OF SHALOTT.

PART I.

ON either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,
That clothe the wold and meet the sky;
And thro' the field the road runs by
 To many-tower'd Camelot;
And up and down the people go,
Gazing where the lilies blow
Round an island there below,
 The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,
Little breezes dusk and shiver
Thro' the wave that runs for ever
By the island in the river
 Flowing down to Camelot.
Four gray walls, and four gray towers,
Overlook a space of flowers,
And the silent isle imbowers
 The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veil'd,
Slide the heavy barges trail'd
By slow horses; and unhail'd
The shallop flitteth silken-sail'd
 Skinning down to Camelot:
But who hath seen her wave her hand?
Or at the casement seen her stand?
Or is she known in all the land,
 The Lady of Shalott?

Only reapers, reaping early
In among the bearded barley,
Hear a song that echoes cheerly
From the river winding clearly,
 Down to tower'd Camelot:
And by the moon the reaper weary,
Piling sheaves in uplands airy,
Listening, whispers 'Tis the fairy
 Lady of Shalott.'

PART II.

THERE she weaves by night and day
A magic web with colors gay.
She has heard a whisper say,
A curse is on her if she stay
 To look down to Camelot.
She knows not what the curse may be,
And so she weaveth steadily,
And little other care hath she,
 The Lady of Shalott.

And moving thro' a mirror clear
That hangs before her all the year,
Shadows of the world appear.
There she sees the highway near
 Winding down to Camelot:
There the river eddy whirls,
And there the surly village-churls,
And the red cloaks of market girls,
 Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,
An abbot on an ambling pad,
Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,
Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad,
 Goes by to tower'd Camelot;
And sometimes thro' the mirror blue
The knights come riding two and two;
She hath no loyal knight and true,
 The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights
To weave the mirror's magic sights,
For often thro' the silent nights
A funeral, with plumes and lights
 And music, went to Camelot:
Or when the moon was overhead,
Came two young lovers lately wed;
'I am half sick of shadows,' said
 The Lady of Shalott.

PART III.

A bow-shot from her bower-eaves,
 He rode between the barley-sheaves,
 The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves,
 And flamed upon the brazen greaves
 Of bold Sir Lancelot.
 A red-cross knight for ever kneel'd
 To a lady in his shield,
 That sparkled on the yellow field,
 Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glitter'd free,
 Like to some branch of stars we see
 Hung in the golden Galaxy.
 The bridle bells rang merrily
 As he rode down to Camelot:
 And from his blazon'd baldric slung
 A mighty silver bugle hung,
 And as he rode his armor rung,
 Beside remote Shalott.

All in the blue unclouded weather
 Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle-
 leather,
 The helmet and the helmet-feather
 Burn'd like one burning flame together,
 As he rode down to Camelot.
 As often thro' the purple night,
 Below the starry clusters bright,
 Some bearded meteor, trailing light,
 Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight
 glow'd;
 On burnish'd hooves his war-horse
 trode;
 From underneath his helmet flow'd
 His coal-black curls as on he rode,
 As he rode down to Camelot.
 From the bank and from the river
 He flash'd into the crystal mirror,
 'Tirra lirra,' by the river
 Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,
 She made three paces thro' the room,
 She saw the water-lily bloom,
 She saw the helmet and the plume,
 She look'd down to Camelot.
 Out flew the web and floated wide;
 The mirror crack'd from side to side;
 'The curse is come upon me,' cried
 The Lady of Shalott.

PART IV.

IN the stormy east-wind straining,
 The pale yellow woods were waning,
 The broad stream in his banks com-
 plaining,
 Heavily the low sky raining
 Over tower'd Camelot;
 Down she came and found a boat
 Beneath a willow left afloat,
 And round about the prow she wrote
The Lady of Shalott.

And down the river's dim expanse
 Like some bold seer in a trance,
 Seeing all his own mischance—
 With a glassy countenance
 Did she look to Camelot.
 And at the closing of the day
 She loosed the chain, and down she
 lay:
 The broad stream bore her far away,
 The Lady of Shalott.

Lying, robed in snowy white
 That loosely flew to left and right—
 The leaves upon her falling light—
 Thro' the noises of the night
 She floated down to Camelot:
 And as the boat-head wound along
 The willowy hills and fields among,
 They heard her singing her last song,
 The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,
 Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
 Till her blood was frozen slowly,
 And her eyes were darken'd wholly,
 Turn'd to tower'd Camelot.
 For ere she reach'd upon the tide
 The first house by the water-side,
 Singing in her song she died,
 The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,
 By garden-wall and gallery,
 A gleaming shape she floated by,
 Dead-pale between the houses high,
 Silent into Camelot.
 Out upon the wharfs they came,
 Knight and burgher, lord and dame,
 And round the prow they read her
 name,
The Lady of Shalott.

Who is this? and what is here?
And in the lighted palace near
Died the sound of royal cheer;
And they cross'd themselves for fear,
All the knights at Camelot:
But Lancelot mused a little space;
He said, 'She has a lovely face;
God in his mercy lend her grace,
The Lady of Shalott.'

MARIANA IN THE SOUTH.

WITH one black shadow at its feet,
The house thro' all the level shins,
Close-latticed to the brooding heat,
And silent in its dusty vines:
A faint-blue ridge upon the right,
An empty river-bed before,
And shallows on a distant shore,
In glaring sand and inlets bright.

But 'Ave Mary,' made she moan,
And 'Ave Mary,' night and
morn,

And 'Ah,' she sang, 'to be all
alone,
To live forgotten, and love for-
lorn.'

She, as her carol sadder grew,
From brow and bosom slowly down
Thro' rosy taper fingers drew
Her streaming curls of deepest
brown

To left and right, and made appear
Still-lighted in a secret shrine,
Her melancholy eyes divine,
The home of woe without a tear.

And 'Ave Mary,' was her moan,
'Madonna, sad is night and
morn,'

And 'Ah,' she sang, 'to be all
alone,
To live forgotten, and love for-
lorn.'

Till all the crimson changed, and past
Into deep orange o'er the sea,
Low on her knees herself she cast,
Before Our Lady murmur'd she;
Complaining, 'Mother, give me grace
To help me of my weary load.'

And on the liquid mirror glow'd
The clear perfection of her face.
'Is this the form,' she made her
moan,
'That won his praises night and
morn?'
And 'Ah,' she said, 'but I wake
alone,
I sleep forgotten, I wake for-
lorn.'

Nor bird would sing, nor lamb would
bleat,

Nor any cloud would cross the vault,
But day increased from heat to heat,
On stony drought and steaming salt;
Till now at noon she slept again,
And seem'd knee-deep in mountain
grass,

And heard her native breezes pass,
And runlets babbling down the glen.

She breathed in sleep a lower
moan,

And murmuring, as at night
and morn,

She thought, 'My spirit is here
alone,
Walks forgotten, and is forlorn.'

Dreaming, she knew 't was a dream:
She felt he was and was not there.
She woke: the babble of the stream
Fell, and, without, the steady glare,
Shrank one sick willow sere and
small.

The river-bed was dusty-white;
And all the furnace of the light
Struck up against the blinding wall.

She whisper'd, with a stifled moan
More inward than at night or
morn,

'Sweet Mother, let me not here
alone

Live forgotten and die forlorn.'

And, rising, from her bosom drew
Old letters, breathing of her worth,
For 'Love,' they said, 'must needs be
true,

To what is loveliest upon earth.'
An image seem'd to pass the door,
To look at her with slight, and say

'But now thy beauty flows away,
So be alone for evermore.'
'O cruel heart,' she changed her
tone,
'And cruel love, whose end is
scorn,
Is this the end to be left alone,
To live forgotten, and die for-
lorn?'

But sometimes in the falling day
An image seem'd to pass the door,
To look into her eyes and say,
'But thou shalt be alone no more.'
And flaming downward over all
From heat to heat the day de-
creased,
And slowly rounded to the east
The one black shadow from the wall.
'The day to night,' she made her
moan,
'The day to night, the night to
morn,
And day and night I am left alone
To live forgotten, and love for-
lorn.

At eve a dry cicala sung,
There came a sound as of the sea;
Backward the lattice-blind she flung,
And lean'd upon the balcony.
There all in spaces rosy-bright
Large Hesper glitter'd on her tears,
And deepening thro' the silent
spheres
Heaven over Heaven rose the night.
And weeping then she made her moan,
'The night comes on that knows
not morn,
When I shall cease to be all alone,
To live forgotten, and love forlorn.'

THE TWO VOICES.

A STILL small voice spake unto me,
'Thou art so full of misery,
Were it not better not to be?'

Then to the still small voice I said;
'Let me not cast in endless shade
What is so wonderfully made.'

To which the voice did urge reply;
'To-day I saw the dragon-fly
Come from the wells where he did lie.

'An inner impulse rent the veil
Of his old husk: from head to tail
Came out clear plates of sapphire
mail.

'He dried his wings: like gauze they
grew;
Thro' crofts and pastures wet with dew
A living flash of light he flew.'

I said, 'When first the world began,
Young Nature thro' five cycles ran,
And in the sixth she moulded man.

'She gave him mind, the lordliest
Proportion, and, above the rest,
Dominion in the head and breast.'

Thereto the silent voice replied;
'Self-blinded are you by your pride:
Look up thro' night: the world is wide.

'This truth within thy mind rehearse,
That in a boundless universe
Is boundless better, boundless worse.

'Think you this mould of hopes and
fears
Could find no statelier than his peers
In yonder hundred million spheres?'

It spake, moreover, in my mind:
'Tho' thou wert scatter'd to the wind,
Yet is there plenty of the kind.'

Then did my response clearer fall:
'No compound of this earthly ball
Is like another, all in all.'

To which he answer'd scoffingly;
'Good soul! I suppose I grant it thee,
Who'll weep for thy deficiency?

'Or will one beam be less intense,
When thy peculiar difference
Is cancell'd in the world of sense?'

I would have said, 'Thou canst not
know.'

But my full heart, that work'd below,
Rain'd thro' my sight its overflow.

Again the voice spake unto me:
'Thou art so steep'd in misery,
Surely 'twere better not to be.

'Thine anguish will not let thee sleep,
Nor any train of reason keep:
Thou canst not think, but thou wilt
weep.'

I said, 'The years with change ad-
vance:

If I make dark my countenance,
I shut my life from happier chance.

'Some turn this sickness yet might
take,
Ev'n yet.' But he: 'What drug can make
A wither'd palsy cease to shake?'

I wept, 'Tho' I should die, I know
That all about the thorn will blow
In tufts of rosy-tinted snow;

'And men, thro' novel spheres of
thought
Still moving after truth long sought,
Will learn new things when I am not.'

'Yet,' said the secret voice, 'some
time,
Sooner or later, will gray prime
Make thy grass hoar with early rime.

'Not less swift souls that yearn for
light,
Rapt after heaven's starry flight,
Would sweep the tracts of day and
night.

'Not less the bee would range her cells,
The furzy prickly fire the dells,
The foxglove cluster dappled bells.'

I said that 'all the years invent;
Each month is various to present
The world with some development.

'Were this not well, to bide mine hour,
Tho' watching from a ruin'd tower
How grows the day of human power?'

'The highest-mounted mind,' he said,
'Still sees the sacred morning spread
The silent summit overhead.

'Will thirty seasons render plain
Those lonely lights that still remain,
Just breaking over land and main?

'Or make that morn, from his cold
crown
And crystal silence creeping down,
Flood with full daylight glebe and
town?

'Forerun thy peers, thy time, and let
Thy feet, millenniums hence, be set
In midst of knowledge, dream'd not
yet.

'Thou hast not gain'd a real height,
Nor art thou nearer to the light,
Because the scale is infinite.

'Twere better not to breathe or speak,
Than cry for strength, remaining weak,
And seem to find, but still to seek.

'Moreover, but to seem to find
Asks what thou lackest, thought
resign'd,
A healthy frame, a quiet mind.'

I said, 'When I am gone away,
'He dared not tarry,' men will say,
Doing dishonor to my clay.'

'This is more vile,' he made reply,
'To breathe and loathe, to live and
sigh,
Than once from dread of pain to die.

'Sick art thou—a divided will
Still heaping on the fear of ill
The fear of men, a coward still.

'Do men love thee? Art thou so
bound
To men, that how thy name may sound
Will vex thee lying underground?

'The memory of the wither'd leaf
In endless time is scarce more brief
Than of the garner'd Autumn-sheaf.

'Go, vexed Spirit, sleep in trust;
The right ear, that is fill'd with dust,
Hears little of the false or just.'

'Hard task, to pluck resolve,' I cried,
'From emptiness and the waste wide
Of that abyss, or scornful pride!

'Nay—rather yet that I could raise
One hope that warm'd me in the days
While still I yearn'd for human praise.

'When, wide in soul and bold of
tongue,
Among the tents I paused and sung,
The distant battle flash'd and rung.

'I sung the joyful Pæan clear,
And, sitting, burnish'd without fear
The brand, the buckler, and the
spear—

'Waiting to strive a happy strife,
To war with falsehood to the knife,
And not to lose the good of life—

'Some hidden principle to move,
To put together, part and prove,
And mete the bounds of hate and
love—

'As far as might be, to carve out
Free space for every human doubt,
That the whole mind might orb
about—

'To search thro' all I felt or saw,
The springs of life, the depths of awe,
And reach the law within the law:

'At least, not rotting like a weed,
But, having sown some generous seed,
Fruitful of further thought and deed,

'To pass, when Life her light with-
draws,
Not void of righteous self-applause,
Nor in a merely selfish cause—

'In some good cause, not in mine own,
To perish, wept for, honor'd, known,
And like a warrior overthrown;

'Whose eyes are dim with glorious
tears,
When, soil'd with noble dust, he hears
His country's war-song thrill his ears:

'Then dying of a mortal stroke,
What time the foeman's line is broke,
And all the war is roll'd in smoke.'

'Yea!' said the voice, 'thy dream
was good,
While thou abodest in the bud.
It was the stirring of the blood.

'If Nature put not forth her power
About the opening of the flower,
Who is it that could live an hour?

'Then comes the check, the change,
the fall,
Pain rises up, old pleasures pall.
There is one remedy for all.

'Yet hadst thou, thro' enduring pain,
Link'd month to month with such a
chain
Of knitted purport, all were vain.

'Thou hadst not between death and
birth
Dissolved the riddle of the earth.
So were thy labor little-worth.

'That men with knowledge merely
play'd,
I told thee—hardly nigher made,
Tho' scaling slow from grade to
grade;

'Much less this dreamer, deaf and
blind,
Named man, may hope some truth to
find,
That bears relation to the mind.

'For every worm beneath the moon
Draws different threads, and late and
soon
Spins, toiling out his own cocoon.

'Cry, faint not: either Truth is born
Beyond the polar gleam forlorn,
Or in the gateways of the morn.

'Cry, faint not, climb: the summits
slope
Beyond the furthest flights of hope,
Wrapt in dense cloud from base to
cope.

'Sometimes a little corner shines,
As over rainy mist inclines
A gleaming crag with belts of pines.

'I will go forward, sayest thou,
I shall not fail to find her now.
Look up, the fold is on her brow.

'If straight thy track, or if oblique,
Thou know'st not. Shadows thou
dost strike,
Embracing cloud, Ixion-like;

'And owning but a little more
Than beasts, abidest lame and poor,
Calling thyself a little lower

'Than angels. Cease to wail and
brawl!
Why inch by inch to darkness crawl?
There is one remedy for all.'

'O dull, one-sided voice,' said I,
'Wilt thou make everything a lie,
To flatter me that I may die?

'I know that age to age succeeds,
Blowing a noise of tongues and deeds,
A dust of systems and of creeds.

'I cannot hide that some have striven,
Achieving calm, to whom was given
The joy that mixes man with Heaven:

'Who, rowing hard against the
stream,
Saw distant gates of Eden gleam,
And did not dream it was a dream;

'But heard, by secret transport led,
Ev'n in the charnels of the dead,
The murmur of the fountain-head—

'Which did accomplish their desire,
Bore and forebore, and did not tire,
Like Stephen, an unquenched fire.

'He heeded not reviling tones,
Nor sold his heart to idle moans,
Tho' cursed and scorn'd, and bruised
with stones:

'But looking upward, full of grace,
He pray'd, and from a happy place
God's glory smote him on the face.'

The sullen answer slid betwixt:
'Not that the grounds of hope were
fix'd,
The elements were kindlier mix'd.'

I said, 'I toil beneath the curse,
But, knowing not the universe,
I fear to slide from bad to worse.

'And that, in seeking to undo
One riddle, and to find the true,
I knit a hundred others new:

'Or that this anguish fleeting hence,
Unmanacled from bonds of sense,
Be fix'd and froz'n to permanence:

'For I go, weak from suffering here:
Naked I go, and void of cheer:
What is it that I may not fear?'

'Consider well,' the voice replied,
'His face, that two hours since hath
died;
Wilt thou find passion, pain or pride?

'Will he obey when one commands?
Or answer should one press his
hands?
He answers not, nor understands.

'His palms are folded on his breast:
There is no other thing express'd
But long disquiet merged in rest.

'His lips are very mild and meek:
Tho' one should smite him on the
cheek,
And on the mouth, he will not speak.

'His little daughter, whose sweet face
He kiss'd, taking his last embrace,
Becomes dishonor to her race—

'His sons grow up that bear his
name,
Some grow to honor, some to
shame,—
But he is chill to praise or blame.

'He will not hear the north-wind
rave,
Nor, moaning, household shelter crave
From winter rains that beat his grave.

'High up the vapors fold and swim :
About him broods the twilight dim :
The place he knew forgetteth him.'

'If all be dark, vague voice,' I said,
'These things are wrapt in doubt and
dread,
Nor canst thou show the dead are
dead.

'The sap dries up : the plant declines.
A deeper tale my heart divines.
Know I not Death? the outward
signs ?

'I found him when my years were
few ;
A shadow on the graves I knew,
And darkness in the village yew.

'From grave to grave the shadow
crept :
In her still place the morning wept :
Touch'd by his feet the daisy slept.

'The simple senses crown'd his head :
"Omega! thou art Lord," they said,
"We find no motion in the dead."

'Why, if man rot in dreamless ease,
Should that plain fact, as taught by
these,
Not make him sure that he shall
cease ?

'Who forged that other influence,
That heat of inward evidence,
By which he doubts against the sense ?

'He owns the fatal gift of eyes,
That read his spirit blindly wise,
Not simple as a thing that dies.

'Here sits he shaping wings to fly :
His heart forebodes a mystery :
He names the name Eternity.

'That type of Perfect in his mind
In Nature can he nowhere find.
He sows himself on every wind.

'He seems to hear a Heavenly Friend,
And thro' thick veils to apprehend
A labor working to an end.

'The end and the beginning vex
His reason : many things perplex,
With motions, checks, and counter-
checks.

'He knows a baseness in his blood
At such strange war with something
good,
He may not do the thing he would.

'Heaven opens inward, chasms yawn,
Vast images in glimmering dawn,
Half shown, are broken and with-
drawn.

'Ah! sure within him and without,
Could his dark wisdom find it out,
There must be answer to his doubt,

'But thou canst answer not again.
With thine own weapon art thou
slain,
Or thou wilt answer but in vain.

'The doubt would rest, I dare not
solve.
In the same circle we revolve.
Assurance only breeds resolve.'

As when a billow, blown against,
Falls back, the voice with which I
fenced
A little ceased, but recommenced.

'Where wert thou when thy father
play'd
In his free field, and pastime made,
A merry boy in sun and shade ?

'A merry boy they call'd him then,
He sat upon the knees of men
In days that never come again.

'Before the little ducts began
To feed thy bones with lime, and ran
Their course, till thou wert also man:

'Who took a wife, who rear'd his
race,
Whose wrinkles gather'd on his face,
Whose troubles number with his
days:

'A life of nothings, nothing-worth,
From that first nothing ere his birth
To that last nothing under earth!'

'These words,' I said, 'are like the
rest;
No certain clearness, but at best
A vague suspicion of the breast:

'But if I grant, thou mightst defend
The thesis which thy words intend—
That to begin implies to end;

'Yet how should I for certain hold,
Because my memory is so cold,
That I first was in human mould?

'I cannot make this matter plain,
But I would shoot, howe'er in vain,
A random arrow from the brain.

'It may be that no life is found,
Which only to one engine bound
Falls off, but cycles always round.

'As old mythologies relate,
Some draught of Lethe might await
The slipping thro' from state to state.

'As here we find in trances, men
Forget the dream that happens then,
Until they fall in trance again.

'So might we, if our state were such—
As one before, remember much,
For those two likes might meet and
touch.

'But, if I lapsed from nobler place,
Some legend of a fallen race
Alone might hint of my disgrace;

'Some vague emotion of delight
In gazing up an Alpine height,
Some yearning toward the lamps of
night;

'Or if thro' lower lives I came—
Tho' all experience past became
Consolidate in mind and frame—

'I might forget my weaker lot;
For is not our first year forgot?
The haunts of memory echo not.

'And men, whose reason long was
blind,
From cells of madness unconfined,
Of lose whole years of darker mind.

'Much more, if first I floated free,
As naked essence, must I be
Incompetent of memory:

'For memory dealing but with time,
And he with matter, could she climb
Beyond her own material prime?

'Moreover, something is or seems,
That touches me with mystic gleams,
Like glimpses of forgotten dreams—

'Of something felt, like something
here;
Of something done, I know not
where;
Such as no language may declare.'

The still voice laugh'd. 'I talk,' said
he,

'Not with thy dreams. Suffice it
thee
Thy pain is a reality.'

'But thou,' said I, 'hast missed thy
mark,
Who sought'st to wreck my mortal
ark,
By making all the horizon dark.

'Why not set forth, if I should do
This rashness, that which might
ensue
With this old soul in organs new?

'Whatever crazy sorrow saith,
No life that breathes with human
breath
Has ever truly long'd for death.

'Tis life, whereof our nerves are
scant,
Oh life, not death, for which we pant;
More life, and fuller, that I want.'

I ceased, and sat as one forlorn.
Then said the voice, in quiet scorn,
'Behold, it is the Sabbath morn.'

And I arose, and I released
The casement, and the light increased
With freshness in the dawning east.

Like soften'd airs that blowing steal,
When meres begin to uncongeal,
The sweet church bells began to peal.

On to God's house the people prest:
Passing the place where each must
rest,
Each enter'd like a welcome guest.

One walk'd between his wife and
child,
With measured footfall firm and mild,
And now and then he gravely smiled.

The prudent partner of his blood
Lean'd on him, faithful, gentle, good,
Wearing the rose of womanhood.

And in their double love secure,
The little maiden walk'd demure,
Pacing with downward eyelids pure.

These thrée made unity so sweet,
My frozen heart began to beat,
Remembering its ancient heat.

I blest them, and they wander'd on:
I spoke, but answer came there none:
The dull and bitter voice was gone.

A second voice was at mine ear,
A little whisper silver-clear,
A murmur, 'Be of better cheer.'

As from some blissful neighborhood,
A notice faintly understood,
'I see the end, and know the good.'

A little hint to solace woe,
A hint, a whisper breathing low,
'I may not speak of what I know.'

Like an Æolian harp that wakes
No certain air, but overtakes
Far thought with music that it
makes:

Such seem'd the whisper at my side:
'What is it thou knowest, sweet
voice?' I cried.
'A hidden hope,' the voice replied:

So heavenly-toned, that in that hour
From out my sullen heart a power
Broke, like the rainbow from the
shower,

To feel, altho' no tongue can prove,
That every cloud; that spreads above
And veileth love, itself is love.

And forth into the fields I went,
And Nature's living motion lent
The pulse of hope to discontent.

I wonder'd at the bounteous hours,
The slow result of winter showers:
You scarce could see the grass for
flowers.

I wonder'd, while I paced along:
The woods were fill'd so full with
song,
There seem'd no room for sense of
wrong;

And all so variously wrought,
I marvel'd how the mind was brought
To anchor by one gloomy thought;

And wherefore rather I made choice
To commune with that barren voice,
Than him that said, 'Rejoice!
Rejoice!'

THE MILLER'S DAUGHTER.

I SEE the wealthy miller yet,
His double chin, his portly size,
And who that knew him could forget
The busy wrinkles round his eyes?
The slow wise smile that, round about
His dusty forehead drily curl'd,
Seem'd half-within and half-without,
And full of dealings with the
world?

In yonder chair I see him sit,
Three fingers round the old silver
cup—
I see his gray eyes twinkle yet
At his own jest—gray eyes lit up
With summer lightnings of a soul
So full of summer warmth, so glad,
So healthy, sound, and clear and
whole,
His memory scarce can make me
sad.

Vet fill my glass: give me one kiss:
My own sweet Alice, we must die.
There's somewhat in this world amiss
Shall be unriddled by and by.
There's somewhat flows to us in life,
But more is taken quite away.
Pray, Alice, pray, my darling wife,
That we may die the self-same day.

Have I not found a happy earth?
I least should breathe a thought of
pain.
Would God renew me from my birth
I'd almost live my life again.
So sweet it seems with thee to walk,
And once again to woo thee mine—
It seems in after-dinner talk
Across the walnuts and the wine—

To be the long and listless boy
Late-left an orphan of the squire,
Where this old mansion mounted
high
Looks down upon the village spire:
For even here, where I and you
Have lived and loved alone so
long,
Each morn my sleep was broken thro'
By some wild skylark's matin song.

And oft I heard the tender dove
In firry woodlands making moan;
But ere I saw your eyes, my love,
I had no motion of my own.
For scarce my life with fancy play'd
Before I dream'd that pleasant
dream—
Still hither thither idly sway'd
Like those long mosses in the
stream.

Or from the bridge I lean'd to hear
The milldam rushing down with
noise,
And see the minnows everywhere
In crystal eddies glance and poise,
The tall flag-flowers when they sprung
Below the range of stepping-stones,
Or those three chestnuts near, that
hung
In masses thick with milky cones.

But, Alice, what an hour was that,
When after roving in the woods
('Twas April then), I came and sat
Below the chestnuts, when their
buds
Were glistening to the breezy blue;
And on the slope, an absent fool,
I cast me down, nor thought of you,
But angled in the higher pool.

A love-song I had somewhere read,
An echo from a measured strain,
Beat time to nothing in my head
From some odd corner of the
brain.
It haunted me, the morning long,
With weary sameness in the rhymes,
The phantom of a silent song.
That went and came a thousand
times.

Then leapt a trout. In lazy mood
I watch'd the little circles die;
They past into the level flood,
And there a vision caught my eye;
The reflex of a beauteous form,
A glowing arm, a gleaming neck,
As when a sunbeam wavers warm
Within the dark and dimpled beck.

For you remember, you had set,
That morning, on the casement-edge
A long green box of mignonette,
And you were leaning from the
ledge:

And when I raised my eyes, above
They met with two so full and
bright—

Such eyes! I swear to you, my love,
That these have never lost their
light.

I loved, and love dispell'd the fear
That I should die an early death:
For love possess'd the atmosphere,
And fill'd the breast with purer
breath.

My mother thought, What ails the
boy?

For I was alter'd, and began
To move about the house with joy,
And with the certain step of man.

I loved the brimming wave that swam
Thro' quiet meadows round the mill,
The sleepy pool above the dam,
The pool beneath it never still,
The meal-sacks on the whiten'd floor,
The dark round of the dripping
wheel,
The very air about the door
Made misty with the floating meal.

And oft in ramblings on the wold,
When April nights began to blow,
And April's crescent glimmer'd cold,
I saw the village lights below;
I knew your taper far away,
And full at heart of trembling hope,
From off the wold I came, and lay
Upon the freshly-flower'd slope.

The deep brook groan'd beneath the
mill;
And 'by that lamp,' I thought, 'she
sits!'

The white chalk-quarry from the hill
Glean'd to the flying moon by fits.
'O that I were beside her now!

O will she answer if I call?
O would she give me vow for vow,
Sweet Alice, if I told her all?

Sometimes I saw you sit and spin;
And, in the pauses of the wind,
Sometimes I heard you sing within;
Sometimes your shadow cross'd the
blind.

At last you rose and moved the light,
And the long shadow of the chair
Flitted across into the night,
And all the casement darken'd
there.

But when at last I dared to speak,
The lanes, you know, were white
with may,
Your ripe lips moved not, but your
cheek

Flush'd like the coming of the day;
And so it was—half-sly, half-shy.
You would, and would not, little
one!

Although I pleaded tenderly,
And you and I were all alone.

And slowly was my mother brought
To yield consent to my desire:
She wish'd me happy, but she thought
I might have look'd a little higher;
And I was young—too young to wed:
'Yet must I love her for your sake;
Go fetch your Alice here,' she said:
Her eyelid quiver'd as she spake.

And down I went to fetch my bride:
But, Alice, you were ill at ease;
This dress and that by turns you tried,
Too fearful that you should not
please.

I loved you better for your fears,
I knew you could not look but well;
And dews, that would have fall'n in
tears,
I kiss'd away before they fell.

I watch'd the little flutterings,
The doubt my mother would not see;
She spoke at large of many things,
And at the last she spoke of me;
And turning look'd upon your face,
As near this door you sat apart,
And rose, and, with a silent grace
Approaching, press'd you heart to
heart.

Ah, well—but sing the foolish song
I gave you, Alice, on the day
When, arm in arm, we went along,
A pensive pair, and you were gay
With bridal flowers—that I may seem,
As in the nights of old, to lie
Beside the mill-wheel in the stream,
While those full chestnuts whisper
by.

It is the miller's daughter,
And she is grown so dear, so dear,
That I would be the jewel
That trembles in her ear:
For hid in ringlets day and night,
I'd touch her neck so warm and white.

And I would be the girdle
About her dainty dainty waist,
And her heart would beat against me,
In sorrow and in rest:
And I should know if it beat right,
I'd clasp it round so close and tight.

And I would be the necklace.
And all day long to fall and rise
Upon her balmy bosom,
With her laughter or her sighs,
And I would lie so light, so light,
I scarce should be unclasp'd at night.

A trifle, sweet! which true love
spells—

True love interprets—right alone.
His light upon the letter dwells,
For all the spirit is his own.
So, if I waste words now, in truth
You must blame Love. His early
rage
Had force to make me rhyme in
youth,
And makes me talk too much in
age.

And now those vivid hours are gone,
Like mine own life to me thou art,
Where Past and Present, wound in
one,

Do make a garland for the heart:
So sing that other song I made,
Half-anger'd with my happy lot,
The day, when in the chestnut shade
I found the blue Forget-me-not.

Love that hath us in the act,
Can he pass, and we forget?
Many suns arise and set.
Many a chance the years beget.
Love the gift is Love the debt.

Even so.

Love is hurt with jar and fret.
Love is made a vague regret.
Eyes with idle tears are wet.
Idle habit links us yet.
What is love? for we forget:
Ah, no! no!

Look thro' mine eyes with thine. True
wife,
Round my true heart thine arms en-
twine
My other dearer life in life,
Look thro' my very soul with thine!
Untouch'd with any shade of years,
May those kind eyes forever dwell!
They have not shed a many tears,
Dear eyes, since first I knew them
well.

Yet tears they shed: they had their
part
Of sorrow: for when time was ripe,
The still affection of the heart
Became an outward breathing type,
That into stillness passed again,
And left a want unknown before;
Although the loss had brought us pain,
That loss but made us love the
more,

With farther lookings on. The kiss,
The woven arms, seem but to be
Weak symbols of the settled bliss,
The comfort, I have found in thee:
But that God bless thee, dear—who
wrought

Two spirits to one equal mind—
With blessings beyond hope or
thought,
With blessings which no words can
find.

Arise, and let us wander forth,
To yon old mill across the wolds;
For look, the sunset, south and north.
Winds all the vale in rosy folds,

And fires your narrow casement glass,
Touching the sullen pool below :
On the chalk-hill the bearded grass
Is dry and dewless. Let us go.

FATIMA.

O LOVE, Love, Love! O withering
night !
O sun, that from thy noonday height
Shudderest when I strain my sight,
Throbbing thro' all thy heat and light,
Lo, falling from my constant mood,
Lo, parch'd and wither'd, dead and
blind,
I whirl like leaves in roaring wind.

Last night I wasted hateful hours
Below the city's eastern towers :
I thirsted for the brooks, the showers :
I roll'd among the tender flowers :
I crush'd them on my breast, my
mouth ;
I look'd athwart the burning drouth
Of that long desert to the south.

Last night, when some one spoke his
name,
From my swift blood that went and
came
A thousand little shafts of flame
Were shiver'd in my narrow frame.
O Love, O fire ! once he drew
With one long kiss my whole soul
thro'
My lips, as sunlight drinketh dew.

Before he mounts the hill, I know
He cometh quickly : from below
Sweet gales, as from deep gardens,
blow
Before him, striking on my brow.
In my dry brain my spirit soon,
Down-deepening from swoon to
swoon,
Faints like a dazzled morning moon.

The wind sounds like a silver wire,
And from beyond the noon a fire
Is pour'd upon the hills, and nigher
The skies stoop down in their desire ;
And, isled in sudden seas of light,

My heart, pierced thro' with fierce
delight,
Bursts into blossom in his sight.

My whole soul waiting silently,
All naked in a sultry sky,
Droops blinded with his shining eye :
I *will* possess him or will die.
I will grow round him in his place,
Grow, live, die looking on his face,
Die, dying clasped in his embrace.

CENONE.

THERE lies a vale in Ida, lovelier
Than all the valleys of Ionian hills.
The swimming vapor slopes athwart
the glen,
Puts forth an arm, and creeps from
pine to pine,
And loiters, slowly drawn. On either
hand
The lawns and meadow-ledges mid-
way down
Hang rich in flowers, and far below
them roars
The long brook falling thro' the
clov'n ravine
In cataract after cataract to the sea.
Behind the valley topmost Gargarus
Stands up and takes the morning :
but in front
The gorges, opening wide apart, re-
veal
Troas and Ilion's column'd citadel,
The crown of Troas.

Hither came at noon
Mournful Cenone, wandering forlorn
Of Paris, once her playmate on the
hills.
Her cheek had lost the rose, and
round her neck
Floated her hair or seem'd to float in
rest.
She, leaning on a fragment twined
with vine,
Sang to the stillness, till the mountain-
shade
Sloped downward to her seat from the
upper cliff.

'O mother Ida, many-fountain'd
Ida,
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
For now the noonday quiet holds the
hill :
The grasshopper is silent in the grass :
The lizard, with his shadow on the
stone,
Rests like a shadow, and the winds
are dead.
The purple flower droops : the golden
bee
Is lily-cradled : I alone awake.
My eyes are full of tears, my heart of
love,
My heart is breaking, and my eyes are
dim,
And I am all awear of my life.

'O mother Ida, many-fountain'd
Ida,
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Hear me, O Earth, hear me, O Hills,
O Caves
That house the cold crown'd snake !
O mountain brooks,
I am the daughter of a River-God,
Hear me, for I will speak, and build
up all
My sorrow with my song, as yonder
walls
Rose slowly to a music slowly breathed,
A cloud that gather'd shape : for it
may be
That, while I speak of it, a little while
My heart may wander from its deeper
woe.

'O mother Ida, many-fountain'd
Ida,
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
I waited underneath the dawning
hills,
Aloft the mountain lawn was dewy-
dark,
And dewy-dark aloft the mountain
pine :
Beautiful Paris, evil-hearted Paris,
Leading a jet-black goat white-horn'd,
white-hooved,
Came up from reedy Simois all alone.

'O mother Ida, harken ere I die.

Far off the torrent call'd me from the
cleft :
Far up the solitary morning smote
The streaks of virgin snow. With
down-dropt eyes
I sat alone : white-breasted like a star
Fronting the dawn he moved ; a leap-
ard skin
Droop'd from his shoulder, but his
sunny hair
Cluster'd about his temples like a
God's :
And his cheek brighten'd as the foam-
bow brightens
When the wind blows the foam, and
all my heart
Went forth to embrace him coming
ere he came.

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
He smiled, and opening out his milk-
white palm
Disclosed a fruit of pure Hesperian
gold,
That smelt ambrosially, and while I
look'd
And listen'd, the full-flowing river of
speech
Came down upon my heart.

"My own (Ænone,
Beautiful-brow'd (Ænone, my own soul,
Behold this fruit, whose gleaming rind
ingrav'n

'For the most fair,' would seem to
award it thine,
As lovelier than whatever Oread
haunt
The knolls of Ida, loveliest in all grace
Of movement, and the charm of
married brows."

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
He prest the blossom of his lips to
mine,
And added "This was cast upon the
board,
When all the full-faced presence of
the Gods
Ranged in the halls of Peleus ; where-
upon
Rose feud, with question unto whom
'twere due :

But light-foot Iris brought it yester-
 eve,
 Delivering, that to me, by common
 voice
 Elected umpire, Herè comes to-day,
 Pallas and Aphroditè, claiming each
 This meed of fairest. Thou, within
 the cave
 Behind yon whispering tuft of oldest
 pine,
 Mayst well behold them unbeheld,
 unheard
 Hear all, and see thy Paris judge of
 Gods."

' Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
 It was the deep midnoon: one silvery
 cloud
 Had lost his way between the piney
 sides
 Of this long glen. Then to the bower
 they came,
 Naked they came to that smooth-
 swarded bower,
 And at their feet the crocus brake like
 fire,
 Violet, amaracus, and asphodel,
 Lotos and lilies: and a wind arose,
 And overheard the wandering ivy and
 vine,
 This way and that, in many a wild
 festoon
 Ran riot, garlanding the gnarled
 boughs
 With bunch and berry and flower thro'
 and thro'.

' O mother Ida, harken ere I die.
 On the tree-tops a crested peacock lit,
 And o'er him flow'd a golden cloud,
 and lean'd
 Upon him, slowly dropping fragrant
 dew.
 Then first I heard the voice of her, to
 whom
 Coming thro' Heaven, like a light
 that grows
 Larger and clearer, with one mind the
 Gods
 Rise up for reverence. She to Paris
 made
 Proffer of royal power, ample rule
 Unquestion'd, overflowing revenue

Wherewith to embellish state, "from
 many a vale
 And river-sunder'd champaign clothed
 with corn,
 Or labor'd mine undrainable of ore.
 Honor," she said, "and homage, tax
 and toll,
 From many an inland town and haven
 large,
 Mast-throng'd beneath her shadowing
 citadel
 In glassy bays among her tallest
 towers."

' O mother Ida, harken ere I die.
 Still she spake on and still she spake
 of power,
 "Which in all action is the end of
 all;
 Power fitted to the season; wisdom-
 bred
 And throned of wisdom—from all
 neighbor crowns
 Alliance and allegiance, till thy hand
 Fail from the sceptre-staff. Such
 boon from me,
 From me, Heaven's Queen, Paris, to
 thee king-born,
 A shepherd all thy life but yet king-
 born,
 Should come most welcome, seeing
 men, in power
 Only, are likest gods, who have attain'd
 Rest in a happy place and quiet seats
 Above the thunder, with undying bliss
 In knowledge of their own suprem-
 acy."

' Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
 She ceased, and Paris held the costly
 fruit
 Out at arm's-length, so much the
 thought of power
 Flatter'd his spirit; but Pallas where
 she stood
 Somewhat apart, her clear and bared
 limbs
 O'erthwarted with the brazen-headed
 spear
 Upon her pearly shoulder leaning
 cold,
 The while, above, her full and earnest
 eye

Over her snow-cold breast and angry
cheek
Kept watch, waiting decision, made
reply.

"Self-reverence, self-knowledge,
self-control,
These three alone lead life to sovereign
power.
Yet not for power (power of herself
Would come uncall'd for) but to live
by law,
Acting the law we live by without
fear;
And, because right is right, to follow
right
Were wisdom in the scorn of conse-
quence."

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Again she said: "I woo thee not with
gifts.
Sequel of guerdon could not alter me
To fairer. Judge thou me by what I
am,
So shalt thou find me fairest.
Yet, indeed,
If gazing on divinity disrobed
Thy mortal eyes are frail to judge of
fair,
Unbias'd by self-profit, oh! rest thee
sure
That I shall love thee well and cleave
to thee,
So that my vigor, wedded to thy blood,
Shall strike within thy pulses, like a
God's,
To push thee forward thro' a life of
shocks,
Dangers, and deeds, until endurance
grow
Sinew'd with action, and the full-
grown will,
Circled thro' all experiences, pure law,
Commeasure perfect freedom."
'Here she ceas'd,
And Paris ponder'd, and I cried, "O
Paris,
Give it to Pallas!" but he heard me
not,
Or hearing would not hear me, woe is
me!

'O mother Ida, many-fountain'd
Ida,
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Idalian Aphrodite beautiful,
Fresh as the foam, new-bathed in
Paphian wells,
With rosy slender fingers backward
drew.
From her warm brows and bosom her
deep hair
Ambrosial, golden round her lucid
throat
And shoulder: from the violets her
light foot
Shone rosy-white, and o'er her rounded
form
Between the shadows of the vine-
bunches
Floated the glowing sunlights, as she
moved.

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die
She with a subtle smile in her mild
eyes,
The herald of her triumph, drawing
nigh
Half-whisper'd in his ear, "I promise
thee
The fairest and most loving wife in
Greece."
She spoke and laugh'd: I shut my
sight for fear:
But when I look'd, Paris had raised
his arm,
And I beheld great Herè's angry eyes,
As she withdrew into the golden cloud,
And I was left alone within the
bower;
And from that time to this I am alone,
And I shall be alone until I die.

'Yet, mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Fairest—why fairest wife? am I not
fair?
My love hath told me so a thousand
times.
Methinks I must be fair, for yesterday,
When I past by, a wild and wanton
pard,
Eyed like the evening star, with play-
ful tail
Crouch'd fawning in the weed. Most
loving is she?

Ah me, my mountain shepherd, that
 my arms
 Were wound about thee, and my hot
 lips prest
 Close, close to thine in that quick-
 falling dew
 Of fruitful kisses, thick as Autumn
 rains
 Flash in the pools of whirling Simois.

'O mother, hear me yet before I
 die.
 They came, they cut away my tallest
 pines,
 My tall dark pines, that plumed the
 craggy ledge
 High over the blue gorge, and all
 between
 The snowy peak and snow-white cata-
 ract
 Foster'd the callow eaglet—from
 beneath
 Whose thick mysterious boughs in
 the dark morn
 The panther's roar came muffled,
 while I sat
 Low in the valley. Never, never more
 Shall lone *Cenone* see the morning
 mist
 Sweep thro' them; never see them
 overlaid
 With narrow moon-lit slips of silver
 cloud,
 Between the loud stream and the
 trembling stars.

'O mother, hear me yet before I die.
 I wish that somewhere in the ruin'd
 folds,
 Among the fragments tumbled from
 the glens,
 Or the dry thickets, I could meet
 with her
 The Abominable, that uninvited came
 Into the fair *Peleïan* banquet-hall,
 And cast the golden fruit upon the
 board,
 And bred this change; that I might
 speak my mind,
 And tell her to her face how much I
 hate
 Her presence, hated both of Gods
 and men.

'O mother, hear me yet before I
 die.

Hath he not sworn his love a thou-
 sand times,
 In this green valley, under this green
 hill,

Ev'n on this hand, and sitting on this
 stone?

Seal'd it with kisses? water'd it with
 tears?

O happy tears, and how unlike to
 these!

O happy Heaven, how canst thou see
 my face?

O happy earth, how canst thou bear
 my weight?

O death, death, death, thou ever-float-
 ing cloud,

There are enough unhappy on this
 earth,

Pass by the happy souls, that love to
 live:

I pray thee, pass before my light of
 life,

And shadow all my soul, that I may
 die.

Thou weighest heavy on the heart
 within,

Weigh heavy on my eyelids: let me
 die.

'O mother, hear me yet before I
 die.

I will not die alone, for fiery thoughts
 Do shape themselves within me, more
 and more,

Whereof I catch the issue, as I hear
 Dead sounds at night come from the
 inmost hills,

Like footsteps upon wool. I dimly
 see

My far-off doubtful purpose, as a
 mother

Conjectures of the features of her
 child

Ere it is born: her child!—a shudder
 comes

Across me: never child be born of
 me,

Unblest, to vex me with his father's
 eyes!

'O mother, hear me yet before I die.

Hear me, O earth. I will not die
alone,
Lest their shrill happy laughter come
to me
Walking the cold and starless road of
Death
Uncomforted, leaving my ancient love
With the Greek woman. I will rise
and go
Down into Troy, and ere the stars
come forth
Talk with the wild Cassandra, for she
says
A fire dances before her, and a sound
Rings ever in her ears of armed men.
What this may be I know not, but I
know
That, wheresoe'er I am by night and
day,
All earth and air seem only burning
fire.

THE SISTERS.

WE were two daughters of one race :
She was the fairest in the face :
The wind is blowing in turret and
tree.
They were together, and she fell ;
Therefore revenge became me well.
O the Earl was fair to see !

She died : she went to burning flame :
She mix'd her ancient blood with
shame.

The wind is howling in turret and
tree.
Whole weeks and months, and early
and late,
To win his love I lay in wait :
O the Earl was fair to see !

I made a feast ; I bad him come ;
I won his love, I brought him home.
The wind is roaring in turret and
tree.

And after supper, on a bed,
Upon my lap he laid his head
O the Earl was fair to see !

I kiss'd his eyelids into rest :
His ruddy cheek upon my breast.

The wind is raging in turret and
tree.

I hated him with the hate of hell,
But I loved his beauty passing well.
O the Earl was fair to see !

I rose up in the silent night :
I made my dagger sharp and bright.
The wind is raving in turret and
tree.

As half-asleep his breath he drew,
Three times I stabb'd him thro' and
thro'.

O the Earl was fair to see !

I curl'd and comb'd his comely head,
He look'd so grand when he was
dead.

The wind is blowing in turret and
tree.

I wrapt his body in the sheet,
And laid him at his mother's feet.
O the Earl was fair to see !

TO —.

WITH THE FOLLOWING POEM.

I SEND you here a sort of allegory,
(For you will understand it) of a soul,
A sinful soul possess'd of many gifts,
A spacious garden full of flowering
weeds,
A glorious Devil, large in heart and
brain,
That did love Beauty only, (Beauty
seen
In all varieties of mould and mind)
And Knowledge for its beauty ; or if
Good,
Good only for its beauty, seeing not
That Beauty, Good, and Knowledge,
are three sisters
That doat upon each other, friends to
man,
Living together under the same roof,
And never can be sunder'd without
tears.
And he that shuts Love out, in turn
shall be
Shut out from Love, and on her
threshold lie

Howling in outer darkness. Not for
 this
 Was common clay ta'en from the
 common earth
 Moulded by God, and temper'd with
 the tears
 Of angels to the perfect shape of
 man.

THE PALACE OF ART.

I BUILT my soul a lordly pleasure-
 house,
 Wherein at ease for aye to dwell.
 I said, 'O Soul, make merry and
 carouse,
 Dear soul, for all is well.'

A huge crag-platform, smooth as
 burnish'd brass
 I chose. The ranged ramparts
 bright
 From level meadow-bases of deep
 grass
 Suddenly scaled the light.

Thereon I built it firm. Of ledge or
 shelf
 The rock rose clear, or winding
 stair.
 My soul would live alone unto herself
 In her high palace there.

And 'while the world runs round and
 round,' I said,
 'Reign thou apart, a quiet king,
 Still as, while Saturn whirls, his sted-
 fast shade
 Sleeps on his luminous ring.'
 To which my soul made answer
 readily:
 'Trust me, in bliss I shall abide
 In this great mansion, that is built for
 me,
 So royal-rich and wide.'

* * * *

Four courts I made, East, West and
 South and North,
 In each a squared lawn, wherefrom

The golden gorge of dragons spouted
 forth
 A flood of fountain-foam.

And round the cool green courts there
 ran a row
 Of cloisters, branch'd like mighty
 woods,
 Echoing all night to that sonorous flow
 Of spouted fountain-floods.

And round the roofs a gilded gallery
 That lent broad verge to distant
 lands,
 Far as the wild swan wings, to where
 the sky
 Dipt down to sea and sands.

From those four jets four currents in
 one swell
 Across the mountain stream'd
 below
 In misty folds, that floating as they
 fell
 Lit up a torrent-bow.

And high on every peak a statue
 seem'd
 To hang on tiptoe, tossing up
 A cloud of incense of all odor steam'd
 From out a golden cup.

So that she thought, 'And who shall
 gaze upon
 My palace with unblinded eyes,
 While this great bow will waver in the
 sun,
 And that sweet incense rise?'

For that sweet incense rose and never
 fail'd,
 And, while day sank or mounted
 higher,
 The light aerial gallery, golden-rail'd,
 Burnt like a fringe of fire.

Likewise the deep-set windows, stain'd
 and traced,
 Would seem slow-flaming crimson
 fires
 From shadow'd grots of arches inter-
 laced,
 And tipt with frost-like spires.

* * * *

Full of long-sounding corridors it was,
That over-vaulted grateful gloom,
Thro' which the live-long day my soul
did pass,
Well-pleased, from room to room.

Full of great rooms and small the
palace stood,
All various, each a perfect whole
From living Nature, fit for every mood
And change of my still soul.

For some were hung with arras green
and blue,
Showing a gaudy summer-morn,
Where with puff'd cheek the belted
hunter blew
His wreathed bugle-horn.

One seem'd all dark and red—a tract
of sand,
And some one pacing there alone,
Who paced for ever in a glimmering
land,
Lit with a low large moon.

One show'd an iron coast and angry
waves.
You seem'd to hear them climb and
fall
And roar rock-thwarted under bellow-
ing caves,
Beneath the windy wall.

And one, a full-fed river winding slow
By herds upon an endless plain,
The ragged rims of thunder brooding
low,
With shadow-streaks of rain.

And one, the reapers at their sultry
toil.
In front they bound the sheaves.
Behind
Were realms of upland, prodigal in
oil,
And hoary to the wind.

And one a foreground black with
stones and slags,

Beyond, a line of heights, and
higher
All barr'd with long white cloud the
scornful crags,
And highest, snow and fire.

And one, an English home—gray twi-
light pour'd
On dewy pastures, dewy trees,
Softer than sleep—all things in order
stored,
A haunt of ancient Peace.

Nor these alone, but every landscape
fair,
As fit for every mood of mind,
Or gay, or grave, or sweet, or stern,
was there
Not less than truth design'd.

* * * *

Or the maid-mother by a crucifix,
In tracts of pasture sunny-warm,
Beneath branch-work of costly sar-
donyx
Sat smiling, babe in arm.

Or in a clear-wall'd city on the sea,
Near gilded organ-pipes, her hair
Wound with white roses, slept St.
Cecily;
An angel look'd at her.

Or thronging all one porch of Paradise
A group of Houris bow'd to see
The dying Islamite, with hands and
eyes
That said, We wait for thee.

Or mythic Uther's deeply-wounded
son
In some fair space of sloping greens
Lay, dozing in the vale of Avalon,
And watch'd by weeping queens.

Or hollowing one hand against his
ear,
To list a foot-fall, ere he saw
The wood-nymph, stay'd the Auso-
nian king to hear
Of wisdom and of law.

Or over hills with peaky tops engrail'd,
And many a tract of palm and rice,
The throne of Indian Cama slowly
sail'd

A summer fann'd with spice.

Or sweet Europa's mantle blew
unclasp'd,
From off her shoulder backward
borne :

From one hand droop'd a crocus : one
hand grasp'd
The mild bull's golden horn.

Or else flush'd Ganymede, his rosy
thigh

Half-buried in the Eagle's down,
Sole as a flying star shot thro' the sky
Above the pillar'd town.

Nor these alone : but every legend fair
Which the supreme Caucasian mind
Carved out of Nature for itself, was
there,
Not less than life, design'd.

* * * *

Then in the towers I placed great
bells that swung,
Moved of themselves, with silver
sound ;

And with choice paintings of wise men
I hung
The royal dais round.

For there was Milton like a seraph
strong,

Beside him Shakespeare bland and
mild ;

And there the world-worn Dante
grasp'd his song,
And somewhat grimly smiled

And there the Ionian father of the
rest ;

A million wrinkles carved his skin ;
A hundred winters snow'd upon his
breast,
From cheek and throat and chin.

Above, the fair hall-ceiling stately-set
Many an arch high up did lift,

And angels rising and descending met
With interchange of gift.

Below was all mosaic choicely plann'd
With cycles of the human tale
Of this wide world, the times of every
land
So wrought, they will not fail.

The people here, a beast of burden
slow,
Toil'd onward, prick'd with goads
and stings ;

Here play'd, a tiger, rolling to and fro
The heads and crowns of kings ;

Here rose, an athlete, strong to break
or bind

All force in bonds that might endure,
And here once more like some sick
man declined,
And trusted any cure.

But over these she trod : and those
great bells
Began to chime. She took her
throne :

She sat betwixt the shining Oriels,
To sing her songs alone.

And thro' the topmost Oriels' colored
flame

Two godlike faces gazed below ;
Plato the wise, and large-brow'd
Verulam,
The first of those who know.

And all those names, that in their
motion were

Full-welling fountain-heads of
change,
Betwixt the slender shafts were
blazon'd fair

In diverse raiment strange :

Thro' which the lights, rose, amber,
emerald, blue,

Flush'd in her temples and her
eyes,

And from her lips, as morn from
Memnon, drew
Rivers of melodies.

No nightingale delighteth to prolong
Her low preamble all alone,
More than my soul to hear her echo'd
song
Throb thro' the ribbed stone ;

Singing and murmuring in her feast-
ful mirth,
Joying to feel herself alive,
Lord over Nature, Lord of the visible
earth,
Lord of the senses five ;

Communing with herself : ' All these
are mine,
And let the world have peace or
wars,
'Tis one to me.' She—when young
night divine
Crown'd dying day with stars,

Making sweet close of his delicious
toils—
Lit light in wreaths and anadems,
And pure quintessences of precious
oils
In hollow'd moons of gems,

To mimic heaven; and clapt her
hands and cried,
' I marvel if my still delight
In this great house so royal-rich, and
wide,
Be flatter'd to the height.

' O all things fair to sate my various
eyes !
O shapes and hues that please me
well !
O silent faces of the Great and Wise,
My Gods, with whom I dwell !

' O God-like isolation which art mine,
I can but count thee perfect gain,
What time I watch the darkening
drowns of swine
That range on yonder plain.

' In filthy sloughs they roll a prurient
skin,
They graze and wallow, breed and
sleep ;

And oft some brainless devil enters
in,
And drives them to the deep.'

Then of the moral instinct would she
prate
And of the rising from the dead,
As hers by right of full-accomplish'd
Fate ;
And at the last she said :

' I take possession of man's mind and
deed.
I care not what the sects may
brawl.
I sit as God holding no form of creed,
But contemplating all.'

* * * *
* * * *

Full oft the riddle of the painful
earth
Flash'd thro' her as she sat alone,
Yet not the less held she her solemn
mirth,
And intellectual throne.

And so she throve and prosper'd : so
three years
She prosper'd : on the fourth she fell,
Like Herod, when the shout was in
his ears,
Struck thro' with pangs of hell.

Lest she should fail and perish utterly,
God, before whom ever lie bare
The abysmal deeps of Personality,
Plagued her with sore despair.

When she would think, where'er she
turn'd her sight
The airy hand confusion wrought,
Wrote, ' Mene, mene,' and divided
quite
The kingdom of her thought.

Deep dread and loathing of her soli-
tude
Fell on her, from which mood was
born
Scorn of herself ; again, from out
that mood
Laughter at her self-scorn.

What! is not this my place of
strength,' she said,
'My spacious mansion built for me,
Whereof the strong foundation-stones
were laid
Since my first memory?'

But in dark corners of her palace
stood
Uncertain shapes; and unawares
On white-eyed phantasms weeping
tears of blood,
And horrible nightmares,

And hollow shades enclosing hearts
of flame,
And, with dim fretted foreheads all,
On corpses three-months-old at noon
she came,
That stood against the wall.

A spot of dull stagnation, without
light
Or power of movement, seem'd my
soul,
'Mid onward-sloping motions infinite
Making for one sure goal.

A still salt pool, lock'd in with bars
of sand,
Left on the shore; that hears all
night
The plunging seas draw backward
from the land
Their moon-led waters white.

A star that with the choral starry dance
Join'd not, but stood, and standing
saw
The hollow orb of moving Circum-
stance
Roll'd round by one fix'd law.

Back on herself her serpent pride had
curl'd.
'No voice,' she shriek'd in that
lone hall,
'No voice breaks thro' the stillness of
this world:
One deep, deep silence all!'

She, mouldering with the dull earth's
mouldering sod,

Inwapt tenfold in slothful shame,
Lay there exiled from eternal God,
Lost to her place and name;

And death and life she hated equally,
And nothing saw, for her despair,
But dreadful time, dreadful eternity,
No comfort anywhere;

Remaining utterly confused with
fears,
And ever worse with growing time,
And ever unrelieved by dismal tears,
And all alone in crime:

Shut up as in a crumbling tomb, girt
round
With blackness as a solid wall,'
Far off she seem'd to hear the dully
sound
Of human footsteps fall.

As in strange lands a traveller walk-
ing slow,
In doubt and great perplexity,
A little before moon-rise hears the
low
Moan of an unknown sea;

And knows not if it be thunder, or a
sound
Of rocks thrown down, or one deep
cry
Of great wild beasts; then thinketh,
'I have found
A new land, but I die.'

She howl'd aloud, 'I am on fire with-
in.

There comes no murmur of reply,
What is it that will take away my sin,
And save me lest I die?'

So when four years were wholly
finished,
She threw her royal robes away.
'Make me a cottage in the vale,' she
said,
'Where I may mourn and pray.

Yet pull not down my palace towers,
that are
So lightly, beautifully built:

Perchance I may return with others
there
When I have purged my guilt.'

LADY CLARA VERE DE VERE.

LADY Clara Vere de Vere,
Of me you shall not win renown:
You thought to break a country heart
For pastime, ere you went to town.
At me you smiled, but unbeguiled
I saw the snare, and I retired:
The daughter of a hundred Earls,
You are not one to be desired.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
I know you proud to bear your name,
Your pride is yet no mate for mine,
Too proud to care from whence
I came,
Nor would I break for your sweet sake
A heart that doats on truer charms.
A simple maiden in her flower
Is worth a hundred coats-of-arms.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
Some meeker pupil you must find,
For were you queen of all that is,
I could not stoop to such a mind.
You sought to prove how I could love,
And my disdain is my reply.
The lion on your old stone gates
Is not more cold to you than I.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
You put strange memories in my
head.
Not thrice your branching limes have
blown
Since I beheld young Laurence dead.
Oh your sweet eyes, your low replies:
A great enchantress you may be;
But there was that across his throat
Which you had hardly cared to see.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
When thus he met his mother's view,
She had the passions of her kind,

She spake some certain truths of
you.
Indeed I heard one bitter word
That scarce is fit for you to hear;
Her manners had not that repose
Which stamps the caste of Vere de
Vere.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
There stands a spectre in your hall:
The guilt of blood is at your door:
You changed a wholesome heart to
gall.
You held your course without remorse,
To make him trust his modest worth,
And, last, you fix'd a vacant stare,
And slew him with your noble birth.

Trust me, Clara Vere de Vere,
From yon blue heavens above us
bent
The gardener Adam and his wife
Smile at the claims of long descent.
Howe'er it be, it seems to me,
'Tis only noble to be good.
Kind hearts are more than coronets,
And simple faith than Norman
blood.

I know you, Clara Vere de Vere,
You pine among your halls and
towers:
The languid light of your proud eyes
Is wearied of the rolling hours.
In glowing health, with boundless
wealth,
But sickening of a vague disease,
You know so ill to deal with time,
You needs must play such pranks
as these.

Clara, Clara Vere de Vere,
If time be heavy on your hands,
Are there no beggars at your gate,
Nor any poor about your lands?
Oh! teach the orphan-boy to read,
Or teach the orphan-girl to sew,
Pray Heaven for a human heart,
And let the foolish yeoman go.

THE MAY QUEEN.

You must wake and call me early, call me early, mother dear;
To-morrow 'ill be the happiest time of all the glad New-year;
Of all the glad New-year, mother, the maddest merriest day;
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

There's many a black black eye, they say, but none so bright as mine;
There's Margaret and Mary, there's Kate and Caroline:
But none so fair as little Alice in all the land they say,
So I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

I sleep so sound all night, mother, that I shall never wake,
If you do not call me loud when the day begins to break:
But I must gather knots of flowers, and buds and garlands gay,
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

As I came up the valley whom think ye should I see,
But Robin leaning on the bridge beneath the hazel-tree?
He thought of that sharp look, mother, I gave him yesterday,
But I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

He thought I was a ghost, mother, for I was all in white,
And I ran by him without speaking, like a flash of light.
They call me cruel-hearted, but I care not what they say,
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

They say he's dying all for love, but that can never be:
They say his heart is breaking, mother—what is that to me?
There's many a bolder lad 'ill woo me any summer day,
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

Little Effie shall go with me to-morrow to the green,
And you'll be there, too, mother, to see me made the Queen;
For the shepherd lads on every side 'ill come from far away,
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

The honeysuckle round the porch has wov'n its wavy bowers,
And by the meadow-trenches blow the faint sweet cuckoo-flowers;
And the wild marsh-marigold shines like fire in swamps and hollows gray,
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

The night-winds come and go, mother, upon the meadow-grass,
And the happy stars above them seem to brighten as they pass;
There will not be a drop of rain the whole of the livelong day,
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

All the valley, mother, 'ill be fresh and green and still,
And the cowslip and the crowfoot are over all the hill,
And the rivulet in the flowery dale 'ill merrily glance and play,
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

So you must wake and call me early, call me early, mother dear,
To-morrow 'ill be the happiest time of all the glad New-year:
To-morrow 'ill be of all the year the maddest merriest day,
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

NEW-YEAR'S EVE.

If you're waking call me early, call me early, mother dear,
For I would see the sun rise upon the glad New-year.
It is the last New-year that I shall ever see,
Then you may lay me low i' the mould and think no more of me.

To-night I saw the sun set: he set and left behind
The good old year, the dear old time, and all my peace of mind;
And the New-year's coming up, mother, but I shall never see
The blossom on the blackthorn, the leaf upon the tree.

Last May we made a crown of flowers: we had a merry day;
Beneath the hawthorn on the green they made me Queen of May;
And we danced about the may-pole and in the hazel copse,
Till Charles's Wain came out above the tall white chimney-tops.

There's not a flower on all the hills: the frost is on the pane:
I only wish to live till the snowdrops come again:
And the snow would melt and the sun come out on high:
I long to see a flower so before the day I die.

The building rook 'll caw from the windy tall elm-tree,
And the tufted plover pipe along the fallow lea,
And the swallow 'ill come back again with summer o'er the wave,
But I shall lie alone, mother, within the mouldering grave.

Upon the chancel-casement, and upon that grave of mine,
In the early early morning the summer sun 'ill shine,
Before the red cock crows from the farm upon the hill.
When you are warm-asleep, mother, and all the world is still.

When the flowers come again, mother, beneath the waning light
You'll never see me more in the long gray fields at night;
When from the dry dark wold the summer airs blow cool
On the oat-grass and the sword-grass, and the bulrush in the pool.

You'll bury me, my mother, just beneath the hawthorn shade,
And you'll come sometimes and see me where I am lowly laid.
I shall not forget you, mother, I shall hear you when you pass,
With your feet above my head in the long and pleasant grass.

I have been wild and wayward, but you'll forgive me now;
You'll kiss me, my own mother, and forgive me ere I go;
Nay, nay, you must not weep, nor let your grief be wild,
You should not fret for me, mother, you have another child.

If I can I'll come again, mother, from out my resting-place;
 Tho' you'll not see me, mother, I shall look upon your face;
 Tho' I cannot speak a word, I shall harken what you say,
 And be often, often with you when you think I'm far away

Goodnight, goodnight, when I have said goodnight forevermore,
 And you see me carried out from the threshold of the door;
 Don't let Effie come to see me till my grave be growing green:
 She'll be a better child to you than ever I have been.

She'll find my garden-tools upon the granary floor:
 Let her take 'em: they are hers: I shall never garden more:
 But tell her, when I'm gone, to train the rosebush that I set
 About the parlor-window and the box of mignonette.

Goodnight, sweet mother: call me before the day is born.
 All night I lie awake, but I fall asleep at morn;
 But I would see the sun rise upon the glad New-year,
 So, if you're waking, call me, call me early, mother dear.

CONCLUSION.

I THOUGHT to pass away before, and yet alive I am;
 And in the fields all round I hear the bleating of the lamb.
 How sadly, I remember, rose the morning of the year!
 To die before the snowdrop came, and now the violet's here.

O sweet is the new violet, that comes beneath the skies,
 And sweeter is the young lamb's voice to me that cannot rise,
 And sweet is all the land about, and all the flowers that blow,
 And sweeter far is death than life to me that long to go.

It seem'd so hard at first, mother, to leave the blessed sun,
 And now it seems as hard to stay, and yet His will be done!
 But still I think it can't be long before I find release;
 And that good man, the clergyman, has told me words of peace.

O blessings on his kindly voice and on his silver hair!
 And blessings on his whole life long, until he meet me there!
 O blessings on his kindly heart and on his silver head!
 A thousand times I blest him, as he knelt beside my bed.

He taught me all the mercy, for he show'd me all the sin.
 Now, tho' my lamp was lighted late, there's One will let me in:
 Nor would I now be well, mother, again if that could be,
 For my desire is but to pass to Him that died for me.

I did not hear the dog howl, mother, or the death-watch beat,
 There came a sweeter token when the night and morning meet:
 But sit beside my bed, mother, and put your hand in mine,
 And Effie on the other side, and I will tell the sign.



"IN YONDER CHAIR I SEE HIM SIT."—Page 11



All in the wild March-morning I heard the angels call;
It was when the moon was setting, and the dark was over all;
The trees began to whisper, and the wind began to roll,
And in the wild March-morning I heard them call my soul.

For lying broad awake I thought of you and Effie dear;
I saw you sitting in the house, and I no longer here;
With all my strength I pray'd for both, and so I felt resign'd
And up the valley came a swell of music on the wind.

I thought that it was fancy, and I listen'd in my bed,
And then did something speak to me—I know not what was said;
For great delight and shuddering took hold of all my mind,
And up the valley came again the music on the wind.

But you were sleeping; and I said, 'It's not for them: it's mine.'
And if it come three times, I thought, I take it for a sign.
And once again it came, and close beside the window-bars,
Then seem'd to go right up to Heaven and die among the stars.

So now I think my time is near. I trust it is. I know
The blessed music went that way my soul will have to go.
And for myself, indeed, I care not if I go to-day,
But, Effie, you must comfort *her* when I am past away.

And say to Robin a kind word, and tell him not to fret;
There's many a worthier than I, would make him happy yet.
If I had lived—I cannot tell—I might have been his wife;
But all these things have ceased to be, with my desire of life.

O look! the sun begins to rise, the heavens are in a glow;
He shines upon a hundred fields, and all of them I know.
And there I move no longer now, and there his light may shine—
Wild flowers in the valley for other hands than mine.

O sweet and strange it seems to me, that ere this day is done
The voice, that now is speaking, may be beyond the sun—
For ever and for ever with those just souls and true—
And what is life, that we should moan? why make we such ado?

For ever and for ever, all in a blessed home—
And there to wait a little while till you and Effie come—
To lie within the light of God, as I lie upon your breast—
And the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.

THE LOTUS-EATERS.

'COURAGE!' he said, and pointed
toward the land,
'This mounting wave will roll us
shoreward soon.'
In the afternoon they came unto a land

In which it seemed always afternoon.
All round the coast the languid air did
swoon,
Breathing like one that hath a weary
dream.
Full-faced above the valley stood the
moon;

And like a downward smoke, the slender stream
Along the cliff to fall and pause and
fall did seem.

A land of streams ! some, like a downward smoke,
Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn,
did go ;
And some thro' wavering lights and
shadows broke,
// Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam
below.

They saw the gleaming river seaward
flow
From the inner land : far off, three
mountain-tops,
|| Three silent pinnacles of aged snow,
Stood sunset-flush'd : and, dew'd with
showery drops,
Up-clomb the shadowy pine above the
woven copse.

The charmed sunset linger'd low
adown
In the red West : thro' mountain clefts
the dale
Was seen far inland, and the yellow
down-
Border'd with palm, and many a wind-
ing vale
And meadow, set with slender galin-
gale ;
A land where all things always seem'd
the same !
And round about the keel with faces
pale,
Dark faces pale against that rosy flame,
The mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-
eaters came.
Branches they bore of that enchanted
stem,
Laden with flower and fruit, whereof
they gave
To each, but whoso did receive of
them,
And taste, to him the gushing of the
wave
Far far away did seem to mourn and
rave
On alien shores ; and if his fellow
spake,

His voice was thin, as voices from the
grave ;
And deep-asleep he seem'd, yet all
awake,
And music in his ears his beating
heart did make.

They sat them down upon the yellow
sand,
Between the sun and moon upon the
shore ;
And sweet it was to dream of Father-
land,
Of child, and wife, and slave ; but ever-
more
Most weary seem'd the sea, weary the
oar,
Weary the wandering fields of barren
foam.
Then some one said, ' We will return
no more ;'
And all at once they sang, ' Our island
home
Is far beyond the wave ; we will no
longer roam.'

CHORIC SONG.

I.

THERE is sweet music here that softer
falls
Than petals from blown roses on the
grass,
Or night-dews on still waters between
walls
Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming
pass ;
Music that gentlier on the spirit lies,
Than tir'd eyelids upon tir'd eyes ;
Music that brings sweet sleep down
from the blissful skies.
Here are cool mosses deep,
And thro' the moss the ivies creep,
And in the stream the long-leaved
flowers weep,
And from the craggy ledge the poppy
hangs in sleep.

II.

Why are we weigh'd upon with heav-
iness,

And utterly consumed with sharp
distress,
While all things else have rest from
weariness?
All things have rest: why should we
toil alone,
We only toil, who are the first of
things,
And make perpetual moan,
Still from one sorrow to another
thrown:
Nor ever fold our wings,
And cease from wanderings,
Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy
balm;
Nor harken what the inner spirit sings,
'There is no joy but calm!'
Why should we only toil, the roof and
crown of things?

III.

Lo! in the middle of the wood,
The folded leaf is woo'd from out the
bad
With winds upon the branch, and
there
Grows green and broad, and takes no
care,
Sun-steep'd at noon, and in the moon
Nightly dew-fed; and turning yellow
Falls, and floats adown the air.
Lo! sweeten'd with the summer light,
The full-juiced apple, waxing over-
mellow,
Drops in a silent autumn night,
All its allotted length of days,
The flower ripens in its place,
Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath
no toil,
Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

IV.

(Hateful is the dark-blue sky,
Vaulted o'er the dark-blue sea.
Death is the end of life; ah, why
Should life all labor be?
Let us alone. Time driveth onward
fast,
And in a little while our lips are dumb.
Let us alone. What is it that will last?
All things are taken from us, and
become

Portions and parcels of the dreadful
Past.
Let us alone. What pleasure can we
have
To war with evil? Is there any peace
In ever climbing up the climbing
wave?
All things have rest, and ripen toward
the grave
In silence; ripen, fall and cease:
Give us long rest or death, dark death,
or dreamful ease.

V.

How sweet it were, hearing the down-
ward stream,
With half-shut eyes ever to seem
Falling asleep in a half-dream!
To dream and dream, like yonder
amber light,
Which will not leave the myrrh-bush
on the height;
To hear each other's whisper'd speech;
Eating the Lotos day by day,
To watch the crisping ripples on the
beach,
And tender curving lines of creamy
spray;
To lend our hearts and spirits wholly
To the influence of mild-minded mel-
ancholy;
To muse and brood and live again in
memory,
With those old faces of our infancy
Heap'd over with a mound of grass,
Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an
urn of brass!

VI.

Dear is the memory of our wedded
lives,
And dear the last embraces of our
wives
And their warm tears: but all hath
suffer'd change:
For surely now our household hearths
are cold:
Our sons inherit us: our looks are
strange:
And we should come like ghosts to
trouble joy.
Or else the island princes over-bold

Have^e eat our substance, and the
 minstrel sings
 Before them of the ten years' war in
 Troy,
 And our great deeds, as half-forgotten
 things.
 Is there confusion in the little isle?
 Let what is broken so remain.
 The Gods are hard to reconcile:
 'Tis hard to settle order once again.
 // There *is* confusion worse than death,
 Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,
 Long labor unto aged breath,
 Sore task to hearts worn out by many
 wars
 And eyes grown dim with gazing on
 the pilot-stars.

VII.

But, propt on beds of amaranth and
 moly,
 How sweet (while warm airs lull us,
 blowing lowly)
 With half-dropt eyelid still,
 Beneath a heaven dark and holy,
 To watch the long bright river draw-
 ing slowly
 His waters from the purple hill—
 To hear the dewy echoes calling
 From cave to cave thro' the thick-
 twined vine—
 To watch the emerald-color'd water
 falling
 Thro' many a wov'n acanthus-wreath
 divine!
 Only to hear and see the far-off spark-
 ling brine,
 Only to hear were sweet, stretch'd out
 beneath the pine.

VIII.

The Lotos blooms below the barren
 peak:
 The Lotos blows by every winding
 creek:
 All day the wind breathes low with
 mellow tone:
 Thro' every hollow cave and alley lone
 Round and round the spicy downs the
 yellow Lotos-dust is blown.

We have had enough of action, and of
 motion we,
 Roll'd to starboard, roll'd to larboard,
 when the surge was seething
 free,
 Where the wallowing monster spouted
 his foam-fountains in the sea.
 Let us swear an oath, and keep it with
 an equal mind,
 In the hollow Lotos-land to live and
 lie reclined
 On the hills like Gods together, care-
 less of mankind.
 For they lie beside their nectar, and
 the bolts are hurl'd
 Far below them in the valleys, and the
 clouds are lightly curl'd
 Round their golden houses, girdled
 with the gleaming world:
 Where they smile in secret, looking
 over wasted lands,
 Blight and famine, plague and earth-
 quake, roaring deeps and fiery
 sands,
 Clanging fights, and flaming towns,
 and sinking ships, and praying
 hands.
 But they smile, they find a music
 centred in a doleful song
 Steaming up, a lamentation and an
 ancient tale of wrong,
 Like a tale of little meaning tho' the
 words are strong;
 Chanted from an ill-used race of men
 that cleave the soil,
 Sow the seed, and reap the harvest
 with enduring toil,
 Storing yearly little dues of wheat, and
 wine and oil;
 Till they perish and they suffer—some,
 'tis whisper'd—down in hell
 Suffer endless anguish, others in
 Elysian valleys dwell,
 Resting weary limbs at last on beds of
 asphodel.
 Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet
 than toil, the shore
 Than labor in the deep mid-ocean,
 wind and wave and oar;
 Oh rest ye, brother mariners, we will
 not wander more.

A DREAM OF FAIR WOMEN.

I READ, before my eyelids dropt their
shade,
'*The Legend of Good Women,*' long
ago

Sung by the morning star of song, who
made
His music heard below ;

Dan Chaucer, the first warbler, whose
sweet breath
Prelude those melodious bursts
that fill

The spacious times of great Elizabeth
With sounds that echo still.

And, for a while, the knowledge of
his art
Held me above the subject, as
strong gales

Hold swollen clouds from raining, tho'
my heart,
Brimful of those wild tales,

Charged both mine eyes with tears.
In every land

I saw, wherever light illumineth,
beauty and anguish walking hand in
hand

The downward slope to death.

Those far-renowned brides of ancient
song

Peopled the hollow dark, like burn-
ing stars,

And I heard sounds of insult, shame,
and wrong,

And trumpets blown for wars ;

And clattering flints batter'd with
clanging hoofs ;

And I saw crowds in column'd sanc-
tuaries ;

And forms that pass'd at windows and
on roofs

Of marble palaces ;

Corpses across the threshold : heroes
tall

Dislodging pinnacle and parapet

Upon the tortoise creeping to the wall ;
Lances in ambush set ;

And high shrine-doors burst thro'
with heated blasts

That run before the fluttering
tongues of fire ;

White surf wind-scatter'd over sails
and masts,

And ever climbing higher ;

Squadrons and squares of men in bra-
zen plates,

Scaffolds, still sheets of water, divers
woes,

Ranges of glimmering vaults with iron
grates,

And hush'd seraglios.

So shape chased shape as swift as,
when to land

Bluster the winds and tides the self-
same way,

Crisp foam-flakes scud along the level
sand,

Torn from the fringe of spray.

I started once, or seem'd to start in pain,
Resolved on noble things, and

strove to speak,

As when a great thought strikes along
the brain,

And flushes all the cheek.

And once my arm was lifted to hew
down

A cavalier from off his saddle-bow,
That bore a lady from a leaguer'd

town ;

And then, I know now not how,

All those sharp fancies, by down-
laping thought

Stream'd onward, lost their edges,
and did creep

Roll'd on each other, rounded,
smooth'd, and brought

Into the gulfs of sleep.

At last methought that I had wander'd
far

In an old wood : fresh-wash'd in
coolest dew

The maiden splendors of the morn-
ing star

Shook in the stedfast blue,

Enormous elm-tree-boles did stoop
and lean
Upon the dusky brushwood under-
neath
Their broad curved branches, fledged
with clearest green,
New from its silken sheath.

The dim red morn had died, her jour-
ney done,
And with dead lips smiled at the
twilight plain,
Half-fall'n across the threshold of the
sun,
Never to rise again.

There was no motion in the dumb
dead air,
Not any song of bird or sound of
rill;
Gross darkness of the inner sepulchre
Is not so deadly still

As that wide forest. Growths of jas-
mine turn'd
Their humid arms festooning tree
to tree,
And at the root thro' lush green grasses
burn'd
The red anemone.

I knew the flowers, I knew the leaves,
I knew
The tearful glimmer of the languid
dawn
On those long, rank, dark wood-walks
drench'd in dew,
Leaning from lawn to lawn.

The smell of violets, hidden in the
green,
Pour'd back into my empty soul and
frame
The times when I remember to have
been
Joyful and free from blame.

And from within me a clear under-tone
Thrill'd thro' mine ears in that un-
blissful clime,
'Pass freely thro': the wood is all
thine own,
Until the end of time.'

At length I saw a lady within call,
Still^{er} than chisell'd marble, stand-
ing there;
A daughter of the gods, divinely tall,
And most divinely fair.

Her loveliness with shame and with
surprise
Froze my swift speech: she turning
on my face
The star-like sorrows of immortal eyes,
Spoke slowly in her place.

'I had great beauty: ask thou not my
name:
No one can be more wise than des-
tiny.
Many drew swords and died.
Where'er I came
I brought calamity.'

'No marvel, sovereign lady: in fair
field
Myself for such a face had boldly
died,'
I answer'd free; and turning I
appeal'd
To one that stood beside.

But she, with sick and scornful looks
averse,
To her full height her stately stat-
ure draws;
'My youth,' she said, 'was blasted
with a curse:
This woman was the cause.

'I was cut off from hope in that sad
place,
Which men call'd Aulis in those
iron years:
My father held his hand upon his face;
I, blinded with my tears,

'Still strove to speak: my voice was
thick with sighs
As in a dream. Dimly I could descry
The stern black-bearded kings with
wolfish eyes,
Waiting to see me die.

'The high masts flicker'd as they lay
afloat;

The crowds, the temples, waver'd,
and the shore ;
The bright death quiver'd at the vic-
tim's throat ;
Touch'd ; and I knew no more.'

Whereto the other with a downward
brow :

' I would the white cold heavy-plung-
ing foam,
Whirl'd by the wind, had roll'd me
deep below,
Then when I left my home.'

Her slow full words sank thro' the si-
lence drear,
As thunder-drops fall on a sleeping
sea :

Sudden I heard a voice that cried,
' Come here,
That I may look on thee.'

I turning saw, throned on a flowery
rise,
One sitting on a crimson scarf un-
roll'd ;
A queen, with swarthy cheeks and
bold black eyes,
Brow-bound with burning gold.

She, flashing forth a haughty smile,
began :

' I govern'd men by change, and so
I sway'd
All moods. 'Tis long since I have
seen a man.
Once, like the moon, I made

' The ever-shifting currents of the
blood
According to my humor ebb and
flow.

I have no men to govern in this
wood :
That makes my only woe.

' Nay—yet it chafes me that I could
not bend
One will ; nor tame and tutor with
mine eye
That dull cold-blooded Cæsar.
Prythee, friend,
Where is Mark Antony ?

' [The man, my lover, with whom I
rode sublime
On Fortune's neck : we sat as God
by God :
The Nilus would have risen before his
time
And flooded at our nod.

' We drank the Libyan Sun to sleep,
and lit
Lamps which out-burn'd Canopus.
O my life
In Egypt ! O the dalliance and the wit,
The flattery and the strife,

' And the wild kiss, when fresh from
war's alarms,
My Hercules, my Roman Antony,
My mailed Bacchus leapt into my
arms,
Contented there to die !

' And there he died : and when I heard
my name
Sigh'd forth with life I would not
brook my fear
Of the other : with a worm I balk'd
his fame.
What else was left ? look here !'

(With that she tore her robe apart,
and half
The polish'd argent of her breast to
sight
Laid bare. Therto she pointed with
a laugh,
Showing the aspik's bite.)

' I died a Queen. The Roman soldier
found
Me lying dead, my crown about my
brows,
A name for ever !—lying robed and
crown'd,
Worthy a Roman spouse.'

Her warbling voice, a lyre of widest
range
Struck by all passion, did fall down
and glance
From tone to tone, and glided thro'
all change
Of liveliest utterance.

When she made pause I knew not for
delight;
Because with sudden motion from
the ground
She raised her piercing orbs, and
fill'd with light
The interval of sound.

Still with their fires Love tipt his
keenest darts;
As once they drew into two burn-
ing rings
All beams of Love, melting the mighty
hearts
Of captains and of kings.

Slowly my sense undazzled. Then I
heard
A noise of some one coming thro'
the lawn,
And singing clearer than the crested
bird
That claps his wings at dawn.

'The torrent brooks of hallow'd Israel
From craggy hollows pouring, late
and soon,
Sound all night long, in falling thro'
the dell,
Far-heard beneath the moon.

'The balmy moon of blessed Israel
Floods all the deep-blue gloom with
beams divine:
All night the splinter'd crags that wall
the dell
With spires of silver shine.

As one that museth where broad sun-
shine laves
The lawn by some cathedral, thro'
the door
Hearing the holy organ rolling waves
Of sound on roof and floor

Within, and anthem sung, is charm'd
and tied
To where he stands,—so stood I,
when that flow
Of music left the lips of her that died
To save her father's vow;

The daughter of the warrior Gilcadite,

A maiden pure; as when she went
along
From Mizpeh's tower'd gate with wel-
come light,
With timbrel and with song.

My words leapt forth: 'Heaven heads
the count of crimes
With that wild oath.' She render'd
answer high:
'Not so, nor once alone; a thousand
times
I would be born and die.

'Single I grew, like some green plant,
whose root
Creeps to the garden water-pipes
beneath,
Feeding the flower; but ere my flower
to fruit
Changed, I was ripe for death.

'My God, my land, my father—these
did move
Me from my bliss of life, that Na-
ture gave,
Lower'd softly with a threefold cord
of love
Down to a silent grave.

'And I went mourning, "No fair He-
brew boy
Shall smile away my maiden blame
among
The Hebrew mothers"—emptied of
all joy,
Leaving the dance and song,

'Leaving the olive-gardens far below,
Leaving the promise of my bridal
bower,
The valleys of grape-loaded vines that
glow
Beneath the battled tower.

'The light white cloud swam over us.
Anon
We heard the lion roaring from his
den;
We saw the large white stars rise one
by one,
Or, from the darken'd glen,

'Saw God divide the night with flying
flame,
And thunder on the everlasting
hills.
I heard Him, for He spake, and grief
became
A solemn scorn of ills.

'When the next moon was roll'd into
the sky,
Strength came to me that equall'd
my desire.
How beautiful a thing it was to die
For God and for my sire!

'It comforts me in this one thought to
dwell,
That I subdued me to my father's
will;
Because the kiss he gave me, ere I fell,
Sweetens the spirit still.

'Moreover it is written that my race
Hew'd Ammon, hip and thigh, from
Aroer
On Arnon unto Minneth.' Here her
face
Glow'd, as I look'd at her.

She lock'd her lips: she left me where
I stood:
'Glory to God,' she sang, and past
afar,
Thridding the sombre boskage of the
wood,
Toward the morning-star.

Losing her carol I stood pensively,
As one that from a casement leans
his head,
When midnight bells cease ringing
suddenly,
And the old year is dead.

'Alas! alas!' a low voice, full of care,
Murmur'd beside me: 'Turn and
look on me:
I am that Rosamond, whom men call
fair,
If what I was I be.

'Would I had been some maiden
coarse and poor!

O me, that I should ever see the
light!
Those dragon eyes of anger'd Eleanor
Do hunt me, day and night.'

She ceased in tears, fallen from hope
and trust:
To whom the Egyptian: 'O, you
tame died!
You should have clung to Fulvia's
waist, and thrust
The dagger thro' her side.'

With that sharp sound the white
dawn's creeping beams,
Stol'n to my brain, dissolved the
mystery
Of folded sleep. The captain of my
dreams
Ruled in the eastern sky.

Morn broaden'd on the borders of the
dark,
Ere I saw her, who clasp'd in her
last trance
Her murder'd father's head, or Joan
of Arc,
A light of ancient France;

Or her who knew that Love can van-
quish Death,
Who kneeling, with one arm about
her king,
Drew forth the poison with her balmy
breath,
Sweet as new buds in Spring.

No memory labors longer from the
deep
Gold-mines of thought to lift the
hidden ore
That glimpses, moving up, than I
from sleep
To gather and tell o'er

Each little sound and sight. With
what dull pain
Compass'd, how eagerly I sought to
strike
Into that wondrous track of dreams
again!
But no two dreams are like.

As when a soul laments, which hath
 been blest,
 Desiring what is mingled with past
 years,
 In yearnings that can never be exprest
 By signs or groans or tears;

Because all words, tho' cull'd with
 choicest art,
 Failing to give the bitter of the
 sweet,
 Wither beneath the palate, and the
 heart
 Faints, faded by its heat.

THE BLACKBIRD.

O BLACKBIRD! sing me something
 well:
 While all the neighbors shoot thee
 round,
 I keep smooth plats of fruitful
 ground,
 Where thou may'st warble, eat and
 dwell.

The espaliers and the standards all
 Are thine; the range of lawn and
 park:
 The unnetted black-hearts ripen
 dark,
 All thine, against the garden wall.

Yet, tho' I spared thee all the spring,
 Thy sole delight is, sitting still,
 With that gold dagger of thy bill
 To fret the summer jenneting.

A golden bill! the silver tongue,
 Cold February loved, is dry:
 Plenty corrupts the melody
 That made thee famous once, when
 young:

And in the sultry garden-squares,
 Now thy flute-notes are changed to
 coarse,
 I hear thee not at all, or hoarse
 As when a hawk hawks his wares.

Take warning! he that will not sing
 While yon sun prospers in the blue,
 Shall sing for want, ere leaves are
 new,
 Caught in the frozen palms of Spring.

THE DEATH OF THE OLD YEAR.

FULL knee-deep lies the winter snow,
 And the winter winds are wearily
 sighing:
 Toll ye the church-bell sad and slow,
 And tread softly and speak low,
 For the old year lies a-dying.
 Old year, you must not die;
 You came to us so readily,
 You lived with us so steadily,
 Old year, you shall not die.

He lieth still: he doth not move:
 He will not see the dawn of day.
 He hath no other life above.
 He gave me a friend, and a true true-
 love,
 And the New-year will take 'em away.
 Old year, you must not go;
 So long as you have been with us,
 Such joy as you have seen with
 us,
 Old year, you shall not go.

He froth'd his bumpers to the brim;
 A jollier year we shall not see.
 But tho' his eyes are waxing dim,
 And tho' his foes speak ill of him,
 He was a friend to me.
 Old year, you shall not die;
 We did so laugh and cry with
 you,
 I've half a mind to die with you,
 Old year, if you must die.

He was full of joke and jest,
 But all his merry quips are o'er.
 To see him die, across the waste
 His son and heir doth ride post-haste,
 But he'll be dead before.
 Every one for his own.
 The night is starry and cold, my
 friend,

And the New-year blithe and
bold, my friend,
Comes up to take his own.

How hard he breathes! over the snow
I heard just now the crowing cock.
The shadows flicker to and fro:
The cricket chirps: the light burns
low:

'Tis nearly twelve o'clock.
Shake hands, before you die.
Old year, we'll dearly rue for you:
What is it we can do for you?
Speak out before you die.

His face is growing sharp and thin.
Alack! our friend is gone.
Close up his eyes: tie up his chin:
Step from the corpse, and let him in
That standeth there alone,
And waiteth at the door.
There's a new foot on the floor, my
friend,
And a new face at the door, my
friend,
A new face at the door.

TO J. S.

THE wind, that beats the mountain,
blows
More softly round the open wold,
And gently comes the world to those
That are cast in gentle mould.

And me this knowledge bolder made,
Or else I had not dared to flow
In these words toward you, and invade
Even with a verse your holy woe.

'Tis strange that those we lean on
most,
Those in whose laps our limbs
are nursed,
Fall into shadow, soonest lost:
Those we love first are taken first.

God gives us love. Something to love
He lends us; but, when love is
grown
To ripeness, that on which it throve
Falls off, and love is left alone.

This is the curse of time. Alas!
In grief I am not all unlearn'd;
Once thro' mine own doors Death did
pass;
One went, who never hath
return'd.

He will not smile—not speak to me
Once more. Two years his chair
is seen
Empty before us. That was he
Without whose life I had not
been.

Your loss is rarer; for this star
Rose with you thro' a little arc
Of heaven, nor having wander'd far
Shot on the sudden into dark.

I knew your brother: his mute dust
I honor and his living worth:
A man more pure and bold and just
Was never born into the earth.

I have not look'd upon you nigh,
Since that dear soul hath fall'n
asleep.
Great Nature is more wise than I:
I will not tell you not to weep.

And tho' mine own eyes fill with dew,
Drawn from the spirit thro' the
brain,
I will not even preach to you,
'Weep, weeping dulls the inward
pain.'

Let Grief be her own mistress still.
She loveth her own anguish deep
More than much pleasure. Let her
will
Be done—to weep or not to weep.

I will not say, 'God's ordinance
Of Death is blown in every wind;'
For that is not a common chance
That takes away a noble mind.

His memory long will live alone
In all our hearts, as mournful light
That broods above the fallen sun,
And dwells in heaven half the
night.

Vain solace! Memory standing near
Cast down her eyes, and in her
throat
Her voice seem'd distant, and a tear
Dropt on the letters as I wrote.

I wrote I know not what. In truth,
How *should* I soothe you anyway,
Who miss the brother of your youth?
Yet something I did wish to say:

For he too was a friend to me:
Both are my friends, and my true
breast
Bleedeth for both; yet it may be
That only silence suiteth best.

Words weaker than your grief would
make
Grief more. 'Twere better I
should cease
Although myself could almost take
The place of him that sleeps in
peace.

Sleep sweetly, tender heart, in peace:
Sleep, holy spirit, blessed soul,
While the stars burn, the moons in-
crease,
And the great ages onward roll.

Sleep till the end, true soul and sweet.
Nothing comes to thee new or
strange.

Sleep full of rest from head to feet;
Lie still, dry dust, secure of
change.

ON A MOURNER.

I.

NATURE, so far as in her lies,
Imitates God, and turns her face
To every land beneath the skies,
Counts nothing that she meets with
base,
But lives and loves in every place

II.

Fills out the homely quickset-screens,
And makes the purple lilac ripe,

Steps from her airy hill, and greens
The swamp, where humm'd the drop-
ping snipe,
With moss and braided marish-pipe;

III.

And on thy heart a finger lays,
Saying, 'Beat quicker, for the time
Is pleasant, and the woods and ways
Are pleasant, and the beech and
lime
Put forth and feel a gladder clime.'

IV.

And murmurs of a deeper voice,
Going before to some far shrine,
Teach that sick heart the stronger
choice,
Till all thy life one way incline
With one wide Will that closes
thine.

V.

And when the zoning eve has died
Where yon dark valleys wind for-
lorn,
Come Hope and Memory, spouse and
bride,
From out the borders of the morn,
With that fair child betwixt them
born.

VI.

And when no mortal motion jars
The blackness round the tombing
sod,
Thro' silence and the trembling stars
Comes Faith from tracts no feet
have trod,
And Virtue, like a household god

VII.

Promising empire; such as those
Once heard at dead of night to greet
Troy's wandering prince, so that he
rose
With sacrifice, while all the fleet
Had rest by stony hills of Crete.

You ask me, why, tho' ill at ease,
Within this region I subsist,
Whose spirits falter in the mist,
And languish for the purple seas.

It is the land that freemen till,
That sober-suited Freedom chose,
The land, where girt with friends
or foes

A man may speak the thing he will ;

A land of settled government,
A land of just and old renown,
Where Freedom slowly broadens
down

From precedent to precedent :

Where faction seldom gathers head,
But by degrees to fullness
wrought,
The strength of some diffusive
thought
Hath time and space to work and
spread.

Should banded unions persecute
Opinion, and induce a time
When single thought is civil
crime,
And individual freedom mute ;

Tho' Power should make from land to
land
The name of Britain trebly great—
Tho' every channel of the State
Should fill and choke with golden
sand—

Yet waft me from the harbor-month,
Wild wind ! I seek a warmer sky,
And I will see before I die
The palms and temples of the South.

Of old sat Freedom on the heights,
The thunders breaking at her feet :
Above her shook the starry lights :
She heard the torrents meet.

There in her place she did rejoice,
Self-gather'd in her prophet-mind,

But fragments of her mighty voice
Came rolling on the wind.

Then stept she down thro' town and
field
To mingle with the human race,
And part by part to men reveal'd
The fullness of her face—

Grave mother of majestic works,
From her isle-altar gazing down,
Who, God-like, grasps the triple forks,
And, King-like, wears the crown :

Her open eyes desire the truth.
The wisdom of a thousand years
Is in them. May perpetual youth
Keep dry their light from tears ;

That her fair form may stand and
shine,
Make bright our days and light
our dreams,
Turning to scorn with lips divine
The falsehood of extremes !

LOVE thou thy land, with love far-
brought

From out the storied Past, and
used

Within the Present, but transfused
Thro' future time by power of thought.

True love turn'd round on fixed poles,
Love, that endures not sordid ends,
For English natures, freemen,
friends,
Thy brothers and immortal souls.

But pamper not a hasty time,
Nor feed with crude imaginings
The herd, wild hearts and feeble
wings
That every sophister can lime.

Deliver not the tasks of might
To weakness, neither hide the ray
From those, not blind, who wait for
day,
Tho' sitting girt with doubtful light.

Make knowledge circle with the winds;
But let her herald, Reverence, fly
Before her to whatever sky
Bear seed of men and growth of minds.

Watch what main-currents draw the years:

Cut Prejudice against the grain:
But gentle words are always gain:
Regard the weakness of thy peers:

Nor toil for title, place, or touch
Of pension, neither count on praise:
It grows to guerdon after-days:
Nor deal in watch-words overmuch:

Not clinging to some ancient saw;
Not master'd by some modern term;

Nor swift nor slow to change, but firm:
And in its season bring the law;

That from Discussion's lip may fall
With Life, that, working strongly, binds—

Set in all lights by many minds,
To close the interests of all.

For Nature also, cold and warm,
And moist and dry, devising long,
Thro' many agents making strong,
Matures the individual form.

Meet is it changes should control
Our being, lest we rust in ease.
We all are changed by still degrees,
All but the basis of the soul.

So let the change which comes be free
To ingroove itself with that which flies,

And work, a joint of state, that plies
Its office, moved with sympathy.

A saying, hard to shape in act;
For all the past of Time reveals
A bridal dawn of thunder-peals,
Wherever Thought hath wedded Fact.

Ev'n now we bear with inward strife
A motion toiling in the gloom—
The Spirit of the years to come
Yearning to mix himself with Life.

A slow-develop'd strength awaits
Completion in a painful school;
Phantoms of other forms of rule,
New Majesties of mighty States—

The warders of the growing hour,
But vague in vapor, hard to mark;
And round them sea and air are dark
With great contrivances of Power.

Of many changes, aptly join'd,
Is bodied forth the second whole.
Regard gradation, lest the soul
Of Discord race the rising wind;

A wind to puff your idol-fires,
And heap their ashes on the head;
To shame the boast so often made,
That we are wiser than our sires.

Oh yet, if Nature's evil star
Drive men in manhood, as in youth,
To follow flying steps of Truth
Across the brazen bridge of war—

If New and Old, disastrous feud,
Must ever shock, like armed foes,
And this be true, till Time shall close,
That Principles are rain'd in blood;

Not yet the wise of heart would cease
To hold his hope thro' shame and guilt,
But with his hand against the hilt,
Would pace the troubled land, like Peace;

Not less, tho' dogs of Faction bay,
Would serve his kind in deed and word,
Certain, if knowledge bring the sword,
That knowledge takes the sword away—

Would love the gleams of good that
broke
From either side, nor veil his eyes :
And if some dreadful need should
rise
Would strike, and firmly, and one
stroke :

To-morrow yet would reap to-day,
As we bear blossom of the dead ;
Earn well the thrifty months, nor
wed
Raw Haste, half-sister to Delay.

ENGLAND AND AMERICA
IN 1782.

O THOU, that sendest out the man
To rule by land and sea,
Strong mother of a Lion-line,
Be proud of those strong sons of thine
Who wrench'd their rights from
thee !

What wonder, if in noble heat
Those men thine arms withstood,
Retought the lesson thou hadst taught,
And in thy spirit with thee fought—
Who sprang from English blood !

But Thou rejoice with liberal joy,
Lift up thy rocky face,
And shatter, when the storms are
black,
In many a streaming torrent back,
The seas that shock thy base !

Whatever harmonies of law
The growing world assume,
Thy work is thine—The single note
From that deep chord which Hamp-
den smote
Will vibrate to the doom.

THE GOOSE.

I KNEW an old wife lean and poor,
Her rags scarce held together ;
There strode a stranger to the door,
And it was windy weather.

He held a goose upon his arm,
He utter'd rhyme and reason,
'Here, take the goose, and keep you
warm,
It is a stormy season.'

She caught the white goose by the leg,
A goose—'twas no great matter.
The goose let fall a golden egg
With cackle and with clatter.

She dropt the goose, and caught the
pelf,
And ran to tell her neighbors ;
And bless'd herself, and cursed her-
self,
And rested from her labors.

And feeding high, and living soft,
Grew plump and able-bodied ;
Until the grave churchwarden doff'd,
The parson smirk'd and nodded.

So sitting, served by man and maid,
She felt her heart grow prouder :
But ah ! the more the white goose
laid
It clack'd and cackled louder.

It clutter'd here, it chuckled there ;
It stirr'd the old wife's mettle :
She shifted in her elbow-chair,
And hurl'd the pan and kettle.

'A quinsy choke thy cursed note !'
Then wax'd her anger stronger.
'Go, take the goose, and wring her
throat,
I will not bear it longer.'

Then yelp'd the cur, and yawl'd the
cat ;
Ran Gaffer, stumbled Gammer.
The goose flew this way and flew that,
And fill'd the house with clamor.

As head and heels upon the floor
They flounder'd all together,
There strode a stranger to the door,
And it was windy weather :

He took the goose upon his arm,
 He utter'd words of scorning;
 'So keep you cold, or keep you warm,
 It is a stormy morning.'

The wild wind rang from park and
 plain,
 And round the attics rumbled,
 'Till all the tables danced again,
 And half the chimneys tumbled.

The glass blew in, the fire blew out,
 The blast was hard and harder.
 Her cap blew off, her gown blew up,
 And a whirlwind clear'd the larder:

And while on all sides breaking loose
 Her household fled the danger,
 Quoth she, 'The Devil take the
 goose,
 And God forget the stranger!'

ENGLISH IDYLLS

AND OTHER POEMS.

THE EPIC.

At Francis Allen's on the Christmas-
 eve,—
 The game of forfeits done—the girls
 all kiss'd
 Beneath the sacred bush and past
 away—
 The parson Holmes, the poet Everard
 Hall,
 The host, and I sat round the wassail-
 bowl,
 Then half-way ebb'd: and there we
 held a talk,
 How all the old honor had from
 Christmas gone,
 Or gone, or dwindled down to some
 odd games
 In some odd nooks like this; till I,
 tired out
 With cutting eights that day upon the
 pond,
 Where, three times slipping from the
 outer edge,
 I bump'd the ice into three several
 stars,
 Fell in a doze; and half-awake I
 heard
 The parson taking wide and wider
 sweeps,
 Now harping on the church-commis-
 sioners,
 Now hawking at Geology and schism;

Until I woke, and found him settled
 down
 Upon the general decay of faith
 Right thro' the world, 'at home was
 little left,
 And none abroad: there was no
 anchor, none,
 To hold by.' Francis, laughing, clapt
 his hand
 On Everard's shoulder, with 'I hold
 by him.'
 'And I,' quoth Everard, 'by the was-
 sail-bowl.'
 'Why yes,' I said, 'we knew your
 gift that way
 At college: but another which you had,
 I mean of verse (for so we held it
 then),
 What came of that?' 'You know,'
 said Frank, 'he burnt
 His epic, his King Arthur, some
 twelve books'—
 And then to me demanding why?
 'Oh, sir,
 He thought that nothing new was
 said, or else
 Something so said 'twas nothing—
 that a truth
 Looks freshest in the fashion of the
 day:
 God knows: he has a mint of
 reasons: ask.
 It pleased *me* well enough.' 'Nay,
 nay,' said Hall,

'Why take the style of those heroic times?
For nature brings not back the Mastodon,
Nor we those times; and why should any man
Remodel models? these twelve books of mine
Were faint Homeric echoes, nothing-worth,
Mere chaff and draff, much better burnt.' 'But I,'
Said Francis, 'pick'd the eleventh from this hearth
And have it: keep a thing, its use will come.
I hoard it as a sugar-plum for Holmes.'
He laugh'd, and I, tho' sleepy, like a horse
That hears the corn-bin open, prick'd my ears;
For I remember'd Everard's college fame
When we were Freshmen: then at my request
He brought it; and the poet little urged,
But with some prelude of disparagement,
Read, mouthing out his nollow oes and aes,
Deep-chested music, and to this result.

MORTE D'ARTHUR.

So all day long the noise of battle roll'd
Among the mountains by the winter sea;
Until King Arthur's table, man by man,
Had fallen in Lyonesse about their Lord,
King Arthur: then, because his wound was deep,
The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,
Sir Bedivere, the last of all his knights,
And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,

A broken chancel with a broken cross,
That stood on a dark strait of barren land.
On one side lay the Ocean, and on one
Lay a great water, and the moon was full.
Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
'The sequel of to-day unsolders all
The goodliest fellowship of famous knights
Whereof this world holds record.
Such a sleep
They sleep—the men I loved. I think that we
Shall never more, at any future time,
Delight our souls with talk of knightly deeds,
Walking about the gardens and the halls
Of Camelot, as in the days that were.
I perish by this people which I made,—
Tho' Merlin sware that I should come again
To rule once more—but let what will be, be,
I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm
That without help I cannot last t'il morn.
Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,
Which was my pride: for thou rememberest how
In those old days, one summer noon, an arm
Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
Holding the sword—and how I row'd across
And took it, and have worn it, like a king:
And, wheresoever I am sung or told
In aftertime, this also shall be known:
But now delay not: take Excalibur,
And fling him far into the middle mere:
Watch what thou seest, and lightly bring me word.'

To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere:

'It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee thus,

Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the helm.

A little thing may harm a wounded man.

Yet I thy best will all perform at full,
Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee word.'

So saying, from the ruin'd shrine he stept

And in the moon athwart the place of tombs,

Where lay the mighty bones of ancient men,

Old knights, and over them the seawind sang

Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He, stepping down

By zig-zag paths, and juts of pointed rock,

Came on the shining levels of the lake.

There drew he forth the brand Excalibur,

And o'er him, drawing it, the winter moon,

Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, ran forth

And sparkled keen with frost against the hilt:

For all the haft twinkled with diamond sparks,

Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work

Of subtlest jewellery. He gazed so long

That both his eyes were dazzled, as he stood,

This way and that dividing the swift mind,

In act to throw: but at the last it seem'd

Better to leave Excalibur conceal'd

There in the many-knotted waterflags,
That whistled stiff and dry about the marge.

So strode he back slow to the wounded King.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:

'Hast thou perform'd my mission which I gave?

What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:

'I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,

And the wild water lapping on the crag.'

To whom replied King Arthur, faint and pale:

'Thou hast betray'd thy nature and thy name,

Not rendering true answer, as be-seem'd

Thy féalty, nor like a noble knight: For surer sign had follow'd, either

hand,

Or voice, or else a motion of the mere. This is a shamelul thing for men to lie.

Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again

As thou art lief and dear, and do the thing

I bad thee, watch, and lightly bring me word.'

Then went Sir Bedivere the second time

Across the ridge, and paced beside the mere,

Counting the dewy pebbles, fix'd in thought;

But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,

How curiously and strangely chased, he smote

His palms together, and he cried aloud,

'And if indeed I cast the brand away,

Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,

Should thus be lost forever from the earth,

Which might have pleased the eyes of many men.

What good should follow this, if this were done?

What harm, undone? deep harm to disobey,

Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.

Were it well to obey then, if a king
demand
An act unprofitable, against himself?
The King is sick, and knows not
what he does.

What record, or what relic of my
lord

Should be to aftertime, but empty
breath

And rumors of a doubt? but were this
kept,

Stored in some treasure-house of
mighty kings,

Some, one might show it at a joust of
arms,

Saying, "King Arthur's sword, Excali-
bur,

Wrought by the lonely maiden of the
Lake.

Nine years she wrought it, sitting in
the deeps

Upon the hidden bases of the hills."

So might some old man speak in the
aftertime

To all the people, winning reverence.
But now much honor and much fame
were lost.'

So spake he, clouded with his own
conceit,

"And hid Excalibur the second time,
And so strode back slow to the
wounded King.

Then spoke King Arthur, breath-
ing heavily:

'What is it thou hast seen? or what
hast heard?'

And answer made the bold Sir
Bedivere:

'I heard the water lapping on the
crag,

And the long ripple washing in the
reeds.'

To whom replied King Arthur,
much in wrath:

'Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,
Unknightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is
me!

Authority forgets a dying king,
Laid widow'd of the power in his eye

That bow'd the will. I see thee what
thou art,

For thou, the latest-left of all my
knights,

In whom should meet the offices of
all,

Thou wouldst betray me for the
precious hilt;

Either from lust of gold, or like a girl
Valuing the giddy pleasure of the
eyes.

Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,
And the third time may prosper, get
thee hence:

But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,
I will arise and slay thee with my
hands.'

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere,
and ran,

And, leaping down the ridges lightly,
plunged

Among the bulrush-beds, and clutch'd
the sword,

And strongly wheel'd and threw it.
The great brand

Made lightnings in the splendor of
the moon,

And flashing round and round, and
whirl'd in an arch,

Shot like a streamer of the northern
morn,

Seen where the moving isles of winter
shock

By night, with noises of the northern
sea.

So flash'd and fell the brand Excali-
bur:

But ere he dipt the surface, rose an
arm

Clothed in white samite, mystic, won-
derful,

And caught him by the hilt, and
brandish'd him

Three times, and drew him under in
the mere.

And lightly went the other to the
King.

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing
thicker breath:

'Now see I by thine eyes that this is
done.

Speak out: what is it thou hast heard,
or seen?'

And answer made the bold Sir
Bedivere:

'Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest
the gems

Should blind my purpose, for I never
 saw,
 Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I
 die,
 Not tho' I live three lives of mortal
 men,
 So great a miracle as yonder hilt.
 Then with both hands I flung him,
 wheeling him;
 But when I look'd again, behold an
 arm,
 { Clothed in white samite, mystic, won-
 derful,
 That caught him by the hilt, and bran-
 dish'd him
 Three times, and drew him under in
 the mere.'

And answer made King Arthur,
 breathing hard:
 'My end draws nigh; 'tis time that I
 were gone.

Make broad thy shoulders to receive
 my weight,
 And bear me to the margin; yet I fear
 My wound hath taken cold, and I
 shall die.'

So saying, from the pavement he
 half rose,
 Slowly, with pain, reclining on his
 arm,
 And looking wistfully with wide blue
 eyes

As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere
 Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,
 And would have spoken, but he found
 not words,

Then took with care, and kneeling on
 one knee,
 O'er both his shoulders drew the lan-
 guid hands,
 And rising bore him thro' the place of
 tombs.

But, as he walk'd, King Arthur
 panted hard,
 Like one that feels a nightmare on his
 bed

When all the house is mute. So
 sigh'd the King,
 Muttering and murmuring at his ear,
 'Quick, quick!

I fear it is too late, and I shall die.'
 But the other swiftly strode from
 ridge to ridge,

Clothed with his breath, and looking,
 as he walk'd,
 Larger than human on the frozen hills.
 He heard the deep behind him, and a
 cry

Before. His own thought drove him,
 like a goad.

Dry clash'd his harness in the icy
 caves

And barren chasms, and all to left and
 right

The bare black cliff clang'd round
 him, as he based

His feet on juts of slippery crag that
 rang

Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed
 heels—

And on a sudden, lo! the level lake,
 And the long glories of the winter
 moon.

Then saw they how there hove a
 dusky barge,

Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to
 stern,

Beneath them; and descending they
 were ware

That all the decks were dense with
 stately forms

Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a
 dream—by these

Three Queens with crowns of gold—
 and from them rose

A cry that shiver'd to the tingling
 stars,

And, as it were one voice an agony
 Of lamentation, like a wind, that
 shrills

All night in a waste land, where no
 one comes,

Or hath come, since the making of the
 world.

Then murmur'd Arthur, 'Place me
 in the barge,'

And to the barge they came. There
 those three Queens

Put forth their hands, and took the
 King, and wept.

But she, that rose the tallest of them
 all

And fairest, laid his head upon her
 lap,

And loosed the shatter'd casque, and
 chafed his hands,

And call'd him by his name, complain-
ing loud,
And dropping bitter tears against his
brow
Striped with dark blood: for all his
face was white
And colorless, and like the wither'd
moon
Smote by the fresh beam of the spring-
ing east;
And all his greaves and cuisses dash'd
with drops
Of onset; and the light and lustrous
curls—
That made his forehead like a rising
sun
High from the dais throne—were
parch'd with dust;
Or, clotted into points and hanging
loose,
Mix'd with the knightly growth that
fringed his lips.
So like a shatter'd column lay the
King;
Not like that Arthur who, with lance
in rest,
From spur to plume a star of tourna-
ment,
Shot thro' the lists at Camélot, and
charged
Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.
Then loudly cried the bold Sir
Bedivere,
'Ah! my Lord Arthur, whither shall
I go?
Where shall I hide my forehead and
my eyes?
For now I see the true old times are
dead,
When every morning brought a noble
chance,
And every chance brought out a noble
knight.
Such times have been not since the
light that led
The holy Elders with the gift of
myrrh.
But now the whole ROUND TABLE is
dissolved
Which was an image of the mighty
world;
And I, the last, go forth companion-
less,

And the days darken round me, and
the years,
Among new men, strange faces, other
minds.'
And slowly answered Arthur from
the barge:
'The old order changeth, yielding
place to new,
And God fulfils Himself in many
ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt
the world.
Comfort thyself: what comfort is in
me?
I have lived my life, and that which I
have done
May He within Himself make pure!
but thou,
If thou shouldst never see my face
again,
Pray for my soul. More things are
wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Where-
fore, let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and
day.
For what are men better than sheep or
goats
That nourish a blind life within the
brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of
prayer
Both for themselves and those who
call them friend?
For so the whole round earth is every
way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of
God.
But now farewell. I am going a long
way
With these thou seest—if indeed I
go—
(For all my mind is clouded with a
doubt)
To the island-valley of Avilion;
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any
snow,
Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it
lies
Deep-meadow'd, happy fair with
orchard-lawns
And bowery hollows crown'd with
summer sea,

Where I will heal me of my grievous wound.'

So said he, and the barge with oar and sail
Moved from the brink, like some full-breasted swan
That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,
Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the flood
With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedivere
Revolving many memories, till the hull
Look'd one black dot against the verge of dawn,
And on the mere the wailing died away.

HERE ended Hall, and our last light, that long
Had wink'd and threaten'd darkness, flared and fell:
At which the Parson, sent to sleep with sound,
And waked with silence, grunted 'Good!' but we
Sat rapt: it was the tone with which he read—
Perhaps some modern touches here and there
Redeem'd it from the charge of nothingness—
Or else we loved the man, and prized his work;
I know not: but we sitting, as I said,
The cock crew loud; as at that time of year
The lusty bird takes every hour for dawn:
Then Francis, muttering, like a man ill-used,
'There now—that's nothing!' drew a little back,
And drove his heel into the smoulder'd log,
That sent a blast of sparkles up the flue:
And so to bed; where yet in sleep I seem'd
To sail with Arthur under looming shores,

Point after point; till on to dawn, when dreams
Begin to feel the truth and stir of day,
To me, methought, who waited with a crowd,
There came a bark that, blowing forward, bore
King Arthur, like a modern gentleman
Of stateliest port; and all the people cried,
'Arthur is come again: he cannot die.'
Then those that stood upon the hills behind
Repeated—'Come again, and thrice as fair;'
And, further inland, voices echo'd—
'Come
With all good things, and war shall be no more.'
At this a hundred bells began to peal,
That with the sound I woke, and heard indeed
The clear church-bells ring in the Christmas-morn.

THE GARDENER'S DAUGHTER;

OR, THE PICTURES.

THIS morning is the morning of the day,
When I and Eustace from the city went
To see the Gardener's Daughter; I and he,
Brothers in Art; a friendship so complete
Portion'd in halves between us, that we grew
The fable of the city where we dwelt.
My Eustace might have sat for Hercules;
So muscular he spread, so broad of breast.
He, by some law that holds in love, and draws
The greater to the lesser, long desired

A certain miracle of symmetry,
 A miniature of loveliness, all grace
 Summ'd up and closed in little;—Juliet, she
 So light of foot, so light of spirit—oh, she
 To me myself, for some three careless moons,
 The summer pilot of an empty heart
 Unto the shores of nothing! Know you not
 Such touches are but embassies of love,
 To tamper with the feelings, ere he found
 Empire for life? but Eustace painted her,
 And said to me, she sitting with us then,
 'When will *you* paint like this?' and I replied,
 (My words were half in earnest, half in jest,)
 'Tis not your work, but Love's. Love, unperceived,
 A more ideal Artist he than all,
 Came, drew your pencil from you, made those eyes
 Darker than darkest pansies, and that hair
 More black than ashbuds in the front of March.'
 And Juliet answer'd laughing, 'Go and see
 The Gardener's daughter: trust me, after that,
 You scarce can fail to match his master-piece.'
 And up we rose, and on the spur we went.
 Not wholly in the busy world, nor quite
 Beyond it, blooms the garden that I love.
 News from the humming city comes to it
 In sound of funeral or of marriage bells;
 And, sitting muffled in dark leaves, you hear
 The windy clanging of the minster clock;
 Although between it and the garden lies

A league of grass, wash'd by a slow broad stream,
 That, stirr'd with languid pulses of the oar,
 Waves all its lazy lilies, and creeps on,
 Barge-laden, to three arches of a bridge
 Crown'd with the minster-towers. The fields between
 Are dewy-fresh, browsed by deep-udder'd kine,
 And all about the large lime feathers low,
 The lime a summer home of murmurous wings.
 In that still place she, hoarded in herself,
 Grew, seldom seen; not less among us lived
 Her fame from lip to lip. Who had not heard
 Of Rose, the Gardener's daughter? Where was he,
 So blunt in memory, so old at heart,
 At such a distance from his youth in grief,
 That, having seen, forgot? The common mouth,
 So gross to express delight, in praise of her
 Grew oratory. Such a lord is Love,
 And Beauty such a mistress of the world.
 And if I said that Fancy, led by Love,
 Would play with flying forms and images,
 Yet this is also true, that, long before
 I look'd upon her, when I heard her name
 My heart was like a prophet to my heart,
 And told me I should love. A crowd of hopes,
 That sought to sow themselves like winged seeds,
 Born out of everything I heard and saw,
 Flutter'd about my senses and my soul;
 And vague desires, like fitful blasts of balm

To one that travels quickly, made the
air
Of Life delicious, and all kinds of
thought,
That verged upon them, sweeter than
the dream
Dream'd by a happy man, when the
dark East,
Unseen, is brightening to his bridal
morn.

And sure this orbit of the mem-
ory folds
For ever in itself the day we went
To see her. All the land in flowery
squares,
Beneath a broad and equal-blowing
wind,
Smelt of the coming summer, as one
large cloud
Drew downward: but all else of
heaven was pure
Up to the Sun, and May from verge
to verge,
And May with me from head to heel.

And now,
As tho' 'twere yesterday, as tho' it were
The hour just flown, that morn with
all its sound,
(For those old Mays had thrice the
life of these,)

Rings in mine ears. The steer forgot
to graze,
And, where the hedge-row cuts the
pathway, stood,
Leaning his horns into the neighbor
field,

And lowing to his fellows. From the
woods
Came voices of the well-contented
doves.

The lark could scarce get out his
notes for joy,
But shook his song together as he
near'd

His happy home, the ground. To left
and right,
The cuckoo told his name to all the
hills;

The mellow ouzel fluted in the elm;
The redcap whistled; and the nightin-
gale

Sang loud, as tho' he were the bird of
day.

And Eustace turn'd, and smiling
said to me,

'Hear how the bushes echo! by my
life,

These birds have joyful thoughts.

Think you they sing

Like poets, from the vanity of song?

Or have they any sense of why they
sing?

And would they praise the heavens
for what they have?

And I made answer, 'Were there
nothing else

For which to praise the heavens but
only love,

That only love were cause enough for
praise.'

Lightly he laugh'd, as one that read
my thought,

And on we went; but ere an hour had
pass'd,

We reach'd a meadow slanting to the
North;

Down which a well-worn pathway
courted us

To one green wicket in a privet
hedge;

This, yielding, gave into a grassy
walk

Thro' crowded lilac-ambush trimly
pruned;

And one warm gust, full-fed with per-
fume, blew

Beyond us, as we enter'd in the cool.
The garden stretches southward. In

the midst

A cedar spread his dark-green layers
of shade.

The garden-glasses shone, and mo-
mently

The twinkling laurel scatter'd silver
lights.

'Eustace,' I said, 'this wonder keeps
the house.'

He nodded, but a moment afterwards
He cried, 'Look! look!' Before he

ceased I turn'd,
And, ere a star can wink, beheld her
there.

For up the porch there grew an
Eastern rose,

That, flowering high, the last night's
gale had caught,



"WITH DOWN-DROPT EYES I SAT ALONE."—*Page 15.*



And blown across the walk. One arm
aloft—
Gown'd in pure white, that fitted to
the shape—
Holding the bush, to fix it back, she
stood,
A single stream of all her soft brown
hair
Pour'd on one side: the shadow of
the flowers
Stole all the golden gloss, and, waver-
ing
Lovingly lower, trembled on her
waist—
Ah, happy shade—and still went wa-
vering down,
But, ere it touch'd a foot, that might
have danced
The greensward into greener circles,
dipt,
And mix'd with shadows of the com-
mon ground!
But the full day dwelt on her brows,
and sunn'd
Her violet eyes, and all her Hebe
bloom,
And doubled his own warmth against
her lips,
And on the bounteous wave of such a
breast
As never pencil drew. Half light,
half shade,
She stood, a sight to make an old
man young.
So rapt, we near'd the house; but
she, a Rose
In roses, mingled with her fragrant
toil,
Nor heard us come, nor from her
tendance turn'd
Into the world without; till close at
hand,
And almost ere I knew mine own
intent,
This murmur broke the stillness of
that air
Which brooded round about her:
'Ah, one rose,
One rose, but one, by those fair
fingers cull'd,
Were worth a hundred kisses press'd
on lips
Less exquisite than thine.'

She look'd: but all
Suffused with blushes—neither self-
possess'd
Nor startled, but betwixt this mood
and that,
Divided in a graceful quiet—paused,
And dropt the branch she held, and
turning, wound
Her looser hair in braid, and stir'd
her lips
For some sweet answer, tho' no
answer came.
Nor yet refused the rose, but granted it,
And moved away, and left me, statue-
like,
In act to render thanks.

I, that whole day,
Saw her no more, altho' I linger'd
there
Till every daisy slept, and Love's
white star
Beam'd thro' the thicken'd cedar in
the dusk.
So home we went, and all the live-
long way
With solemn gibe did Eustace banter
me.
'Now,' said he, 'will you climb the
top of Art.
You cannot fail but work in hues to
dim
The Titianic Flora. Will you match
My Juliet? you, not you,—the Master,
Love,
A more ideal Artist he than all.'
So home I went, but could not
sleep for joy,
Reading her perfect features in the
gloom,
Kissing the rose she gave me o'er
and o'er,
And shaping faithful record of the
glance
That graced the giving—such a noise
of life
Swarm'd in the golden present, such
a voice
Call'd to me from the years to come,
and such
A length of bright horizon rimm'd
the dark.
And all that night I heard the watch-
man peal

The sliding season: all that night I
heard
The heavy clocks knolling the drowsy
hours.
The drowsy hours, dispensers of all
good,
O'er the mute city stole with folded
wings,
Distilling odors on me as they went
To greet their fairer sisters of the
East.

Love at first sight, first-born, and
heir to all,
Made this night thus. Henceforward
squall nor storm
Could keep me from that Eden where
she dwelt.
Light pretexts drew me; sometimes
a Dutch love
For tulips; then for roses, moss or
musk,
To grace my city rooms; or fruits
and cream
Served in the weeping elm; and more
and more
A word could bring the color to my
cheek;
A thought would fill my eyes with
happy dew;
Love trebled life within me, and with
each
The year increased.

The daughters of the year,
One after one, thro' that still garden
pass'd;
Each garlanded with her peculiar
flower
Danced into light, and died into the
shade;
And each in passing touch'd with
some new grace
Or seem'd to touch her, so that day
by day,
Like one that never can be wholly
known,
Her beauty grew; till Autumn
brought an hour
For Eustace, when I heard his deep
'I will,'
Breathed, like the covenant of a God,
to hold
From thence thro' all the worlds: but
I rose up

Full of his bliss, and following her
dark eyes
Felt earth as air beneath me, till I
reach'd
The wicket-gate, and found her stand-
ing there.

There sat we down upon a garden
mound,
Two mutually enfolded; Love, the
third,
Between us, in the circle of his arms
Enwound us both; and over many a
range
Of waning lime the gray cathedral
towers,
Across a hazy glimmer of the west,
Reveal'd their shining windows: from
them clash'd
The bells; we listen'd; with the
time we play'd,
We spoke of other things; we
coursed about
The subject most at heart, more near
and near,
Like doves about a dove-cote, wheel-
ing round
The central wish, until we settled
there.

Then, in that time and place, I
spoke to her,
Requiring, tho' I knew it was mine
own,
Yet for the pleasure that I took to
hear,
Requiring at her hand the greatest gift,
A woman's heart, the heart of her I
loved;
And in that time and place she
answer'd me,
And in the compass of three little
words,
More musical than ever came in one,
The silver fragments of a broken
voice,
Made me most happy, faltering, 'I am
thine.'

Shall I cease here? Is this enough
to say
That my desire, like all strongest
hopes,
By its own energy fulfill'd itself,
Merged in completion? Would you
learn at full

How passion rose thro' circumstan-
tial grades
Beyond all grades develop'd? and in-
deed

I had not staid so long to tell you all,
But while I mused came Memory
with sad eyes,

Holding the folded annals of my
youth;

And while I mused, Love with knit
brows went by,

And with a flying finger swept my
lips,

And spake, 'Be wise: not easily for-
given

Are those, who setting wide the doors
that bar

The secret bridal chambers of the
heart,

Let in the day.' Here, then, my
words have end.

Yet might I tell of meetings, of
farewells—

Of that which came between, more
sweet than each,

In whispers, like the whispers of the
leaves

That tremble round a nightingale—in
sighs

Which perfect Joy, perplex'd for
utterance,

Stole from her sister Sorrow. Might
I not tell

Of difference, reconciliation, pledges
given,

And vows, where there was never
need of vows,

And kisses, where the heart on one
wild leap

Hung tranced from all pulsation, as
above

The heavens between their fairy
fleece pale

Sow'd all their mystic gulfs with fleet-
ing stars;

Or while the balmy glooming, cres-
cent-lit,

Spread the light haze along the river-
shores,

And in the hollows; or as once we
met

Unheedful, tho' beneath a whispering
rain

Night slid down one long stream of
sighing wind,
And in her bosom bore the baby,
Sleep.

But this whole hour your eyes have
been intent

On that veil'd picture—veil'd, for
what it holds

May not be dwelt on by the common
day.

This prelude has prepared thee. Raise
thy soul;

Make thine heart ready with thine
eyes: the time

Is come to raise the veil.

Behold' her there,
As I beheld her ere she knew my

heart,
My first, last love; the idol of my

youth,
The darling of my manhood, and,

alas!
Now the most blessed memory of

mine age.

DORA.

WITH farmer Allan at the farm abode
William and Dora. William was his

son,
And she his niece. He often look'd

at them,
And often thought, 'I'll make them

man and wife.'

Now Dora felt her uncle's will in all,
And yearn'd toward William; but

the youth, because
He had been always with her in the

house.

Thought not of Dora.

Then there came a day
When Allan call'd his son, and said,

'My son:
I married late, but I would wish to

see
My grandchild on my knees before I

die:
And I have set my heart upon a

match.
Now therefore look to Dora; she is

well

To look to; thrifty too beyond her age.
 She is my brother's daughter: he and I
 Had once hard words, and parted,
 and he died
 In foreign lands; but for his sake I
 bred
 His daughter Dora: take her for
 your wife;
 For I have wish'd this marriage, night
 and day,
 For many years.' But William an-
 swer'd short;
 'I cannot marry Dora; by my life,
 I will not marry Dora.' Then the
 old man
 Was wroth, and doubled up his
 hands, and said:
 'You will not, boy! you dare to an-
 swer thus!
 But in my time a father's word was
 law,
 And so it shall be now for me. Look
 to it:
 Consider, William: take a month to
 think,
 And let me have an answer to my
 wish;
 Or, by the Lord that made me, you
 shall pack,
 And never more darken my doors
 again.'
 But William answer'd madly; bit his
 lips,
 And broke away. The more he
 look'd at her
 The less he liked her; and his ways
 were harsh;
 But Dora bore them meekly. Then
 before
 The month was out he left his father's
 house,
 And hired himself to work within the
 fields;
 And half in love, half spite, he woo'd
 and wed
 A laborer's daughter, Mary Morrison.
 Then, when the bells were ringing,
 Allan call'd
 His niece and said: 'My girl, I love
 you well;
 But if you speak with him that was
 my son,

Or change a word with her he calls
 his wife,
 My home is none of yours. My will
 is law.'
 And Dora promised, being meek.
 She thought,
 'It cannot be: my uncle's mind will
 change.'
 And days went on, and there was
 born a boy
 To William; then distresses came on
 him;
 And day by day he pass'd his father's
 gate,
 Heart-broken, and his father help'd
 him not.
 But Dora stored what little she
 could save,
 And sent it them by stealth, nor did
 they know
 Who sent it; till at last a fever seized
 On William, and in harvest time he
 died.
 Then Dora went to Mary. Mary sat
 And look'd with tears upon her boy,
 and thought
 Hard things of Dora. Dora came
 and said:
 'I have obey'd my uncle until now,
 And I have sinn'd, for it was all thro'
 me
 This evil came on William at the first.
 But, Mary, for the sake of him that's
 gone,
 And for your sake, the woman that
 he chose,
 And for this orphan, I am come to
 you:
 You know there has not been for
 these five years
 So full a harvest: let me take the
 boy,
 And I will set him in my uncle's eye
 Among the wheat; that when his
 heart is glad
 Of the full harvest, he may see the
 boy,
 And bless him for the sake of him
 that's gone.'
 And Dora took the child, and went
 her way
 Across the wheat, and sat upon a
 mound

That was unsown, where many poppies grew.

Far off the farmer came into the field

And spied her not; for none of all his men

Dare tell him Dora waited with the child;

And Dora would have risen and gone to him,

But her heart fail'd her; and the reapers reap'd,

And the sun fell, and all the land was dark.

But when the morrow came, she rose and took

The child once more, and sat upon the mound;

And made a little wreath of all the flowers

That grew about, and tied it round his hat

To make him pleasing in her uncle's eye.

Then when the farmer pass'd into the field

He spied her, and he left his men at work,

And came and said: 'Where were you yesterday?

Whose child is that? What are you doing here?'

So Dora cast her eyes upon the ground,

And answer'd softly, 'This is William's child!'

'And did I not,' said Allan, 'did I not

Forbid you, Dora?' Dora said again:

'Do with me as you will, but take the child,

And bless him for the sake of him that's gone!'

And Allan said, 'I see it is a trick

Got up betwixt you and the woman there.

I must be taught my duty, and by you! You knew my word was law, and yet you dared

To slight it. Well—for I will take the boy;

But go you hence, and never see me more.'

So saying, he took the boy that cried aloud

And struggled hard. The wreath of flowers fell

At Dora's feet. She bow'd upon her hands,

And the boy's cry came to her from the field,

More and more distant. She bow'd down her head,

Remembering the day when first she came,

And all the things that had been. She bow'd down

And wept in secret; and the reapers reap'd,

And the sun fell, and all the land was dark.

Then Dora went to Mary's house, and stood

Upon the threshold. Mary saw the boy

Was not with Dora. She broke out in praise

To God, that help'd her in her widowhood.

And Dora said, 'My uncle took the boy;

But, Mary, let me live and work with you:

He says that he will never see me more.'

Then answer'd Mary, 'This shall never be,

That thou shouldst take my trouble on thyself:

And, now I think, he shall not have the boy,

For he will teach him hardness, and to slight

His mother; therefore thou and I will go,

And I will have my boy, and bring him home;

And I will beg of him to take thee back:

But if he will not take thee back again,

Then thou and I will live within one house,

And work for William's child, until he grows

Of age to help us.'

So the women kiss'd
Each other, and set out, and reach'd
the farm.
The door was off the latch: they
peep'd, and saw
The boy set up betwixt his grandsire's
knees,
Who thrust him in the hollows of his
arm,
And clapt him on the hands and on
the cheeks,
Like one that loved him: and the lad
stretch'd out
And babbled for the golden seal, that
hung
From Allan's watch, and sparkled by
the fire.
Then they came in: but when the boy
beheld
His mother, he cried out to come to
her:
And Allan set him down, and Mary
said:
'O Father!—if you let me call you
so—
I never came a-begging for myself,
Or William, or this child; but now I
come
For Dora: take her back; she loves
you well.
O Sir, when William died, he died at
peace
With all men; for I ask'd him, and he
said,
He could not ever rue his marrying
me—
I had been a patient wife: but, Sir, he
said
That he was wrong to cross his father
thus:
"God bless him!" he said, "and
may he never know
The troubles I have gone thro'!"
Then he turn'd
His face and pass'd—unhappy that I
am!
But now, Sir, let me have my boy, for
you
Will make him hard, and he will learn
to slight
His father's memory; and take Dora
back,
And let all this be as it was before.'

So Mary said, and Dora hid her face
By Mary. There was silence in the
room;
And all at once the old man burst in
sobs:—

'I have been to blame—to blame.
I have kill'd my son.
I have kill'd him—but I loved him—
my dear son.
May God forgive me!—I have been to
blame.
Kiss me, my children.'

Then they clung about
The old man's neck, and kiss'd him
many times.
And all the man was broken with re-
morse;
And all his love came back a hundred-
fold;
And for three hours he sobb'd o'er
William's child
Thinking of William.

So those four abode
Within one house together; and as
years
Went forward, Mary took another
mate;
But Dora lived unmarried till her
death.

AUDLEY COURT.

'THE Bull, the Fleece are cram'd,
and not a room
For love or money. Let us picnic
there
At Audley Court.'

I spoke, while Audley feast
Humm'd like a hive all round the
narrow quay,
To Francis, with a basket on his arm,
To Francis just alighted from the
boat,
And breathing of the sea. 'With all
my heart,'
Said Francis. Then we shoulder'd
thro' the swarm,
And rounded by the stillness of the
beach
To where the bay runs up its latest
horn.

We left the dying ebb that faintly
lipp'd
The flat red granite; so by many a
sweep
Of meadow smooth from aftermath we
reach'd
The griffin-guarded gates, and pass'd
thro' all
The pillar'd dusk of sounding sycam-
ores,
And cross'd the garden to the gar-
dener's lodge,
With all its casements bedded, and its
walls
And chimneys muffled in the leafy
vine.
There, on a slope of orchard,
Francis laid
A damask napkin wrought with horse
and hound,
Brought out a dusky loaf that smelt of
home,
And, half-cut-down, a pasty costly-
made,
Where quail and pigeon, lark and
leveret lay,
Like fossils of the rock, with golden
yolks
Imbedded and injellied; last, with
these,
A flask of cider from his father's
vats,
Prime, which I knew; and so we sat
and eat
And talk'd old matters over; who was
dead,
Who married, who was like to be, and
how
The races went, and who would rent
the hall:
Then touch'd upon the game, how
scarce it was
This season; glancing thence, dis-
cuss'd the farm,
The four-field system, and the price of
grain;
And struck upon the corn-laws, where
we split,
And came again together on the king
With heated faces; till he laugh'd
aloud;
And, while the blackbird on the
pippin hung

To hear him, clapt his hand in mine
and sang—

'Oh! who would fight and march
and countermarch,
Be shot for sixpence in a battle-field,
And shovell'd up into some bloody
trench

Where no one knows? but let me live
my life.

'Oh! who would cast and balance
at a desk,

Perch'd like a crow upon a three-legg'd
stool,

Till all his juice is dried, and all his
joints

Are full of chalk? but let me live my
life.

'Who'd serve the state? for if I
carved my name

Upon the cliffs that guard my native
land,

I might as well have traced it in the
sands;

The sea wastes all: but let me live my
life.

'Oh! who would love? I woo'd a
woman once,

But she was sharper than an eastern
wind,

And all my heart turn'd from her, as
a thorn

Turns from the sea; but let me live
my life.'

He sang his song, and I replied with
mine:

I found it in a volume, all of songs,
Knock'd down to me, when old Sir

Robert's pride,
His books—the more the pity, so I

said—
Came to the hammer here in March—

and this—
I set the words, and added names I

knew.
'Sleep, Ellen Aubrey, sleep, and
dream of me:

Sleep, Ellen, folded in thy sister's arm,
And sleeping, haply dream her arm is

mine.
'Sleep, Ellen, folded in Emilia's

arm;
Emilia, fairer than all else but thou,

For thou art fairer than all else that is.

'Sleep, breathing health and peace
upon her breast :
Sleep, breathing love and trust against
her lip :

I go to-night : I come to-morrow morn.
'I go, but I return : I would I were
The pilot of the darkness and the
dream.

Sleep, Ellen Aubrey, love, and dream
of me.'

So sang we each to either, Francis
Hale,

The farmer's son, who lived across
the bay,

My friend ; and I, that having where-
withal,

And in the fallow leisure of my life
A rolling stone of here and every-
where,

Did what I would ; but ere the night
we rose

And saunter'd home beneath a moon,
that, just

In crescent, dimly rain'd about the
leaf

Twilights of airy silver, till we reach'd
The limit of the hills ; and as we
sank

From rock to rock upon the glooming
quay,

The town was hush'd beneath us :
lower down

The bay was oily calm ; the harbor-
buoy,

Sole star of phosphorescence in the
calm,

With one green sparkle ever and
anon

Dipt by itself, and we were glad at
heart.

WALKING TO THE MAIL.

John. I'm glad I walk'd. How
fresh the meadows look
Above the river, and, but a month
ago,

The whole hill-side was redder than a
fox.

Is yon plantation where this byway
joins

The turnpike ?

James. Yes.

John. And when does this come
by ?

James. The mail ? At one o'clock.

John. What is it now ?

James. A quarter to.

John. Whose house is that I see ?

No, not the County Member's with
the vane :

Up higher with the yew-tree by it,
and half

A score of gables.

James. That ? Sir Edward Head's :
But he's abroad : the place is to be
sold.

John. Oh, his. He was not
broken.

James. No, sir, he,
Vex'd with a morbid devil in his
blood

That veil'd the world with jaundice,
hid his face

From all men, and commercing with
himself,

He lost the sense that handles daily
life—

That keeps us all in order more or
less—

And sick of home went overseas for
change.

John. And whither ?

James. Nay, who knows ? he's
here and there.

But let him go ; his devil goes with
him,

As well as with his tenant, Jocky
Dawes.

John. What's that ?

James. You saw the man—on
Monday, was it ?—

There by the humpback'd willow ;
half stands up

And bristles ; half has fall'n and
made a bridge ;

And there he caught the younker
tickling trout—

Caught *in flagrante*—what's the
Latin word ?—

Delicto : but his house, for so they
say,

Was haunted with a jolly ghost, that
shook

The curtains, whined in lobbies, tapt
at doors,
And rummaged like a rat: no serv-
ant stay'd:

The farmer vext packs up his beds
and chairs,
And all his household stuff; and with
his boy
Betwixt his knees, his wife upon the
tilt,

Sets out, and meets a friend who
hails him, 'What!

You're flitting!' 'Yes, we're flitting,'
says the ghost

(For they had pack'd the thing
among the beds,)

'Oh well,' says he, 'you flitting with
us too—

Jack, turn the horses' heads and home
again.'

John. He left his wife behind; for
so I heard.

James. He left her, yes. I met
my lady once:

A woman like a butt, and harsh as
crabs.

John. Oh yet but I remember, ten
years back—

'Tis now at least ten years—and then
she was—

You could not light upon a sweeter
thing:

A body slight and round, and like a
pear

In growing, modest eyes, a hand, a
foot

Lessening in perfect cadence, and a
skin

As clean and white as privet when it
flowers.

James. Ay, ay, the blossom fades,
and they that loved

At first like dove and dove were cat
and dog.

She was the daughter of a cottager,
Out of her sphere. What betwixt

shame and pride,
New things and old, himself and her,

she sour'd
To what she is: a nature never

kind!
Like men, like manners: like breeds
like, they say:

Kind nature is the best: those man-
ners next

That fit us like a nature second-
hand;

Which are indeed the manners of the
great.

John. But I had heard it was this
bill that past,

And fear of change at home, that
drove him hence.

James. That was the last drop in
the cup of gall.

I once was near him, when his bailiff
brought

A Chartist pike. You should have
seen him wince

As from a venomous thing: he
thought himself

A mark for all, and shudder'd, lest a
cry

Should break his sleep by night, and
his nice eyes

Should see the raw mechanic's bloody
thumbs

Sweat on his blazon'd chairs; but, sir,
you know

That these two parties still divide the
world—

Of those that want, and those that
have: and still

The same old sore breaks out from
age to age

With much the same result. Now I
myself,

A Tory to the quick, was as a boy
Destructive, when I had not what I

would.

I was at school—a college in the
South:

There lived a flayflint near; we stole
his fruit,

His hens, his eggs; but there was law
for us:

We paid in person. He had a sow,
sir. She,

With meditative grunts of much con-
tent,

Lay great with pig, wallowing in sun
and mud.

By night we dragg'd her to the col-
lege tower

From her warm bed, and up the cork-
screw stair

With hand and rope we haled the
groaning sow,
And on the leads we kept her till she
pigg'd.

Large range of prospect had the
mother sow,
And but for daily loss of one she
loved

As one by one we took them—but for
this—

As never sow was higher in this
world—

Might have been happy : but what
lot is pure ?

We took them all, till she was left
alone

Upon her tower, the Niobe of swine,
And so return'd unfarrow'd to her sty.

John. They found you out ?

James. Not they.

John. Well—after all—

What know we of the secret of a
man ?

His nerves were wrong. What ails
us, who are sound,

That we should mimic this raw fool
the world,

Which charts us all in its coarse
blacks or whites,

As ruthless as a baby with a worm,
As cruel as a schoolboy ere he grows

To Pity—more from ignorance than
will.

But put your best foot forward, or
I fear

That we shall miss the mail : and
here it comes

With five at top : as quaint a four-in-
hand

As you shall see—three pyebalds and
a roan.

EDWIN MORRIS;

OR, THE LAKE.

O ME, my pleasant rambles by the
lake,

My sweet, wild, fresh three quarters
of a year,

My one Oasis in the dust and drouth

Of city life ! I was a sketcher then :
See here, my doing : curves of moun-
tain, bridge,

Boat, island, ruins of a castle, built
When men knew how to build, upon
a rock

With turrets lichen-gilded like a rock :
And here, new-comers in an ancient
hold,

New-comers from the Mersey, million-
aires,

Here lived the Hills—a Tudor-chim-
nied bulk

Of mellow brickwork on an isle of
bowers.

O me, my pleasant rambles by the
lake

With Edwin Morris and with Edward
Bull

The curate ; he was fatter than his
cure.

But Edwin Morris, he that knew
the names,

Long learned names of agaric, moss
and fern,

Who forged a thousand theories of
the rocks,

Who taught me how to skate, to
row, to swim,

Who read me rhymes elaborately
good,

His own—I call'd him Crichton, for
he seem'd

All-perfect, finish'd to the finger nail.

And once I ask'd him of his early
life,

And his first passion ; and he an-
swer'd me ;

And well his words became him : was
he not

A full-cell'd honeycomb of eloquence
Stored from all flowers ? Poet-like

he spoke.

' My love for Nature is as old as I ;
But thirty moons, one honeymoon to
that,

And three rich sennights more, my
love for her.

My love for Nature and my love for
her,

Of different ages, like twin-sisters
grew,
Twin-sisters differently beautiful.
To some full music rose and sank the
sun,
And some full music seem'd to move
and change
With all the varied changes of the
dark,
And either twilight and the day be-
tween;
For daily hope fulfill'd, to rise again
Revolving toward fulfilment, made it
sweet
To walk, to sit, to sleep, to wake, to
breathe.'

Or this or something like to this he
spoke.
Then said the fat-faced curate Ed-
ward Bull,
'I take it, God made the woman
for the man,
And for the good and increase of the
world.
A pretty face is well, and this is well,
To have a dame indoors, that trims
us up,
And keeps us tight; but these unreal
ways
Seem but the theme of writers, and
indeed
Worn threadbare. Man is made of
solid stuff.
I say, God made the woman for the
man,
And for the good and increase of the
world.'

'Parson,' said I, 'you pitch the pipe
too low:
But I have sudden touches, and can
run
My faith beyond my practice into his:
Tho' if, in dancing after Letty Hill,
I do not hear the bells upon my cap,
I scarce have other music: yet say on,
What should one give to light on
such a dream?'
I ask'd him half-sardonically.
'Give?
Give all thou art,' he answer'd, and a
light

Of laughter dimpled in his swarthy
cheek;
'I would have hid her needle in my
heart,
To save her little finger from a scratch
No deeper than the skin: my ears
could hear
Her lightest breath; her least remark
was worth
The experience of the wise. I went
and came;
Her voice fled always thro' the sum-
mer land;
I spoke her name alone. Thrice-
happy days!
The flower of each, those moments
when we met,
The crown of all, we met to part no
more.'

Were not his words delicious, I a
beast
To take them as I did? but some-
thing jarr'd;
Whether he spoke too largely; that
there seem'd
A touch of something false, some
self-conceit,
Or over-smoothness: howsoe'er it
was,
He scarcely hit my humor, and I i'
:

'Friend Edwin, do not think your-
self alone
Of all men happy. Shall not Love to
me,
As in the Latin song I learnt at
school,
Sneeze out a full God-bless-you right
and left?
But you can talk: yours is a kindly
vein:
I have, I think,—Heaven knows—as
much within;
I have, or should have, but for a
thought or two,
That like a purple beech among the
greens
Looks out of place: 'tis from no
want in her:
It is my shyness, or my self-distrust,
Or something of a wayward modern
mind

Dissecting passion. Time will set me right.'

So spoke I knowing not the things that were.
Then said the fat-faced curate, Edward Bull :
' God made the woman for the use of man,
And for the good and increase of the world.'
And I and Edwin laughed ; and now we paused
About the windings of the marge to hear
The soft wind blowing over meadowy holms
And alders, garden-isles ; and now we left
The clerk behind us, I and he, and ran
By ripply shallows of the lipping lake,
Delighted with the freshness and the sound.

But, when the bracken rusted on their crags,
My suit had wither'd, nipt to death by him
That was a God, and is a lawyer's clerk,
The rentroll Cupid of our rainy isles.
'Tis true, we met ; one hour I had, no more :
She sent a note, the seal an *Elle vous suit*,
The close, 'Your Letty, only yours ;' and this
Thrice underscored. The friendly mist of morn
Clung to the lake. I boated over, ran
My craft aground, and heard with beating heart
The Sweet-Gale rustle round the shelving keel ;
And out I lept, and up I crept : she moved,
Like Proserpine in Enna, gathering flowers :
Then low and sweet I whistled thrice ; and she,
She turn'd, we closed, we kiss'd, swore faith, I breathed

In some new planet : a silent cousin stole
Upon us and departed : 'Leave,' she cried,
'O leave me !' 'Never, dearest, never : here
I brave the worst : ' and while we stood like fools
Embracing, all at once a score of pugs
And poodles yell'd within, and out they came
Trustees and Aunts and Uncles.
'What, with him !
Go ' (shrill'd the cotton-spinning chorus) ; 'him !'
I choked. Again they shriek'd the burthen—' Him !'
Again with hands of wild rejection
'Go !—
Girl, get you in !' She went—and in one month
They wedded her to sixty thousand pounds,
To lands in Kent and messuages in York,
And slight Sir Robert with his watery smile
And educated whisker. But for me,
They set an ancient creditor to work :
It seems I broke a close with force and arms :
There came a mystic token from the king
To greet the sheriff, needless courtesy !
I read, and fled by night, and flying turn'd :
Her taper glimmer'd in the lake below :
I turn'd once more, close-button'd to the storm ;
So left the place, left Edwin, nor have seen
Him since, nor heard of her, nor cared to hear.

Nor cared to hear ? perhaps : yet long ago
I have pardon'd little Letty ; not indeed,
It may be, for her own dear sake but this,

She seems a part of those tresh days
to me;
For in the dust and drouth of Lon-
don life
She moves among my visions of the
lake,
While the prime swallow dips his
wing, or then
While the gold-lily blows, and over-
head
The light cloud smoulders on the
summer crag.

ST. SIMEON STYLITES.

ALTHO' I be the basest of mankind,
From scalp to sole one slough and
crust of sin,
Unfit for earth, unfit for heaven, scarce
meet
For troops of devils, mad with blas-
phemy,
I will not cease to grasp the hope I
hold
Of saintdom, and to clamor, mourn
and sob,
Pattering the gates of heaven with
storms of prayer,
Have mercy, Lord, and take away my
sin.

Let this avail, just, dreadful, mighty
God,
This not be all in vain, that thrice ten
years,
Thrice multiplied by superhuman
pangs,
In hungers and in thirsts, fevers and
cold,
In coughs, aches, stitches, ulcerous
throes and cramps,
A sign betwixt the meadow and the
cloud,
Patient on this tall pillar I have borne
Rain, wind, frost, heat, hail, damp, and
sleet, and snow;
And I had hoped that ere this period
closed
Thou wouldst have caught me up into
thy rest,
Denying not these weather-beaten
limbs

The meed of saints, the white robe
and the palm.

O take the meaning, Lord: I do not
breathe,
Not whisper, any murmur of com-
plaint.
Pain heap'd ten-hundred-fold to this,
were still
Less burthen, by ten-hundred-fold, to
bear,
Than were those lead-like tons of sin,
that crush'd
My spirit flat before thee.

O Lord, Lord,
Thou knowest I bore this better at
the first,
For I was strong and hale of body
then;
And tho' my teeth, which now are
dropt away,
Would chatter with the cold, and all
my beard
Was tagg'd with icy fringes in the
moon,
I drown'd the whoopings of the owl
with sound
Of pious hymns and psalms, and some-
times saw
An angel stand and watch me, as I
sang,
Now am I feeble grown; my end
draws nigh;
I hope my end draws nigh: half deaf
I am,
So that I scarce can hear the people
hum
About the column's base, and almost
blind,
And scarce can recognize the fields I
know;
And both my thighs are rotted with
the dew;
Yet cease I not to clamor and to cry,
While my stiff spine can hold my
weary head,
Till all my limbs drop piecemeal from
the stone,
Have mercy, mercy: take away my
sin.
O Jesus, if thou wilt not save my
soul,
Who may be saved? who is it may be
saved?

Who may be made a saint, if I fail
here?
Show me the man hath suffer'd more
than I.
For did not all thy martyrs die one
death?
For either they were stoned, or cruci-
fied,
Or burn'd in fire, or boil'd in oil, or
sawn
In twain beneath the ribs; but I die
here
To-day, and whole years long, a life
of death.
Bear witness, if I could have found a
way
(And heedfully I sifted all my thought)
More slowly-painful to subdue this
home
Of sin, my flesh, which I despise and
hate,
I had not stinted practice, O my God.
For not alone this pillar-punish-
ment,
Not this alone I bore: but while I
lived
In the white convent down the valley
there,
For many weeks about my loins I
wore
The rope that haled the buckets from
the well,
Twisted as tight as I could knot the
noose;
And spake not of it to a single soul,
Until the ulcer, eating thro' my skin,
Betray'd my secret penance, so that all
My brethren marvell'd greatly. More
than this
I bore, whereof, O God, thou knowest
all.
Three winters, that my soul might
grow to thee,
I lived up there on yonder mountain
side.
My right leg chain'd into the crag, I
lay
Pent in a roofless close of ragged
stones;
Inswathed sometimes in wandering
mist, and twice
Black'd with thy branding thunder,
and sometimes

Sucking the damps for drink, and eat-
ing not,
Except the spare chance-gift of those
that came
To touch my body and be heal'd, and
live:
And they say then that I work'd mira-
cles,
Whereof my fame is loud amongst
mankind.
Cured lameness, palsies, cancers.
Thou, O God,
Knowest alone whether this was or no.
Have mercy, mercy! cover all my sin.
Then, that I might be more alone
with thee,
Three years I lived upon a pillar, high
Six cubits, and three years on one of
twelve;
And twice three years I crouch'd on
one that rose
Twenty by measure; last of all, I
grew
Twice ten long weary weary years to
this,
That numbers forty cubits from the
soil.
I think that I have borne as much
as this—
Or else I dream—and for so long a
time,
If I may measure time by yon slow
light,
And this high dial, which my sorrow
crowns—
So much—even so.
And yet I know not well,
For that the evil ones come here, and
say,
'Fall down, O Simeon: thou hast
suffer'd long
For ages and for ages!' then they
prate
Of penances I cannot have gone thro',
Perplexing me with lies; and oft I
fall,
Maybe for months, in such blind
lethargies
That Heaven, and Earth, and Time
are choked.
But yet
Bethink thee, Lord, while thou and all
the saints

Enjoy themselves in heaven, and men
on earth
House in the shade of comfortable
roofs,
Sit with their wives by fires, eat whole-
some food,
And wear warm clothes, and even
beasts have stalls,
I, 'tween the spring and downfall of
the light,
Bow down one thousand and two
hundred times,
To Christ, the Virgin Mother, and the
saints;
Or in the night, after a little sleep,
I wake : the chill stars sparkle ; I am
wet
With drenching dews, or stiff with
crackling frost.
I wear an undress'd goatskin on my
back ;
A grazing iron collar grinds my
neck ;
And in my weak, lean arms I lift the
cross,
And strive and wrestle with thee till I
die :
O mercy, mercy ! wash away my sin.
O Lord, thou knowest what a man I
am ;
A sinful man, conceived and born in
sin :
'Tis their own doing ; this is none of
mine ;
Lay it not to me. Am I to blame for
this,
That here come those that worship
me ? Ha ! ha !
They think that I am somewhat.
What am I ?
The silly people take me for a saint,
And bring me offerings of fruit and
flowers :
And I, in truth (thou wilt bear witness
here)
Have all in all endured as much, and
more
Than many just and holy men, whose
names
Are register'd and calendar'd for
saints.
Good people, you do ill to kneel to
me.

What is it I can have done to merit
this ?
I am a sinner viler than you all.
It may be I have wrought some
miracles,
And cured some halt and maim'd ; but
what of that ?
It may be, no one, even among the
saints,
May match his pains with mine ; but
what of that ?
Yet do not rise ; for you may look on
me,
And in your looking you may kneel to
God.
Speak ! is there any of you halt or
maim'd ?
I think you know I have some power
with Heaven
From my long penance : let him speak
his wish.
Yes, I can heal him. Power goes
forth from me.
They say that they are heal'd. Ah,
hark ! they shout
'St. Simeon Stylites.' Why, if so,
God reaps a harvest in me. O my
soul,
God reaps a harvest in thee. If this
be,
Can I work miracles and not be saved ?
This is not told of any. They were
saints.
It cannot be but that I shall be saved ;
Yea, crown'd a saint. They shout,
'Behold a saint !'
And lower voices saint me from above.
Courage, St. Simeon ! This dull
chrysalis
Cracks into shining wings, and hope
ere death
Spreads more and more and more, that
God hath now
Sponged and made blank of crimeful
record all
My mortal archives.
O my sons, my sons,
I, Simeon of the pillar, by surname
Stylites, among men ; I, Simeon,
The watcher on the column till the
end ;
I, Simeon, whose brain the sunshine
bakes ;

I, whose bald brows in silent hours
become
Unnaturally hoar with rime, do now
From my high nest of penance here
proclaim
That Pontius and Iscariot by my side
Show'd like fair seraphs. On the
coals I lay,
A vessel full of sin: all hell beneath
Made me boil over. Devils pluck'd
my sleeve,
Abaddon and Asmodeus caught at me.
I smote them with the cross; they
swarm'd again.
In bed like monstrous apes they
crush'd my chest:
They flapp'd my light out as I read: I
saw
Their faces grow between me and my
book;
With colt-like whinny and with hog-
gish whine
They burst my prayer. Yet this way
was left,
And by this way I 'scaped them.
Mortify
Your flesh, like me, with scourges
and with thorns;
Smite, shrink not, spare not. If it may
be, fast
Whole Lents, and pray. I hardly,
with slow steps,
With slow, faint steps, and much
exceeding pain,
Have scrambled past those pits of fire,
that still
Sing in mine ears. But yield not me
the praise:
God only thro' his bounty hath thought
fit,
Among the powers and princes of
this world,
To make me an example to mankind,
Which few can reach to. Yet I do
not say
But that a time may come—yea, even
now,
Now, now, his footsteps smite the
threshold stairs
Of life—I say, that time is at the
doors
When you may worship me without re-
proach;

For I will leave my relics in your land,
And you may carve a shrine about my
dust,
And burn a fragrant lamp before my
bones,
When I am gather'd to the glorious
saints.

While I spake then, a sting of
shrewdest pain
Ran shrivelling thro' me, and a cloud-
like change,
In passing, with a grosser film made
thick
These heavy, horny eyes. The end!
the end!

Surely the end! What's here? a
shape, a shade,
A flash of light. Is that the angel
there

That holds a crown? Come, blessed
brother, come.

I know thy glittering face. I waited
long;

My brows are ready. What! deny it
now?

Nay, draw, draw, draw nigh. So I
clutch it. Christ!

'Tis gone: 'tis here again; the crown!
the crown!

So now 'tis fitted on and grows to me,
And from it melt the dews of Paradise,
Sweet! sweet! spikenard, and balm,
and frankincense.

Ah! let me not be fool'd, sweet saints:
I trust

That I am whole, and clean, and meet
for Heaven.

Speak, if there be a priest, a man of
God,

Among you there, and let him pres-
ently

Approach, and lean a ladder on the
shaft,

And climbing up into my airy home,
Deliver me the blessed sacrament;

For by the warning of the Holy Ghost,
I prophesy that I shall die to-night,

A quarter before twelve.

But thou, O Lord,
Aid all this foolish people; let them
take

Example, pattern: lead them to thy
light.

THE TALKING OAK.

ONCE more the gate behind me falls;
Once more before my face
I see the moulder'd Abbey-walls,
That stand within the chace.

Beyond the lodge the city lies,
Beneath its drift of smoke;
And ah! with what delighted eyes
I turn to yonder oak.

For when my passion first began,
Ere that, which in me burn'd,
The love, that makes me thrice a
man,
Could hope itself return'd;

To yonder oak within the field
I spoke without restraint,
And with a larger faith appeal'd
Than Papist unto Saint

For oft I talk'd with him apart,
And told him of my choice,
Until he plagiarized a heart,
And answer'd with a voice.

Tho' what he whisper'd under Heaven
None else could understand;
I found him garrulously given,
A babbler in the land.

But since I heard him make reply
Is many a weary hour;
'Twere well to question him, and try
If yet he keeps the power.

Hail, hidden to the knees in fern,
Broad Oak of Summer-chace,
Whose topmost branches can discern
The roofs of Summer-place!

Say thou, whereon I carved her name,
If ever maid or spouse,
As fair as my Olivia, came
To rest beneath thy boughs.—

'O Walter, I have shelter'd here
Whatever maiden grace
The good old Summers, year by year
Made ripe in Summer-chace:

'Old Summers, when the monk was
fat,
And, issuing shorn and sleek,
Would twist his girdle tight, and pat
The girls upon the cheek,

'Ere yet, in scorn of Peter's-pence,
And number'd bead, and shirt,
Bluff Harry broke into the spence
And turn'd the cowls adrift:

'And I have seen some score of those
Fresh faces, that would thrive
When his man-minded offset rose
To chase the deer at five;

'And all that from the town would
stroll,
Till that wild wind made work
In which the gloomy brewer's soul
Went by me, like a stork:

'The slight she-slips of loyal blood,
And others, passing praise,
Strait-laced, but all-too-full in bud
For puritanic stays:

'And I have shadow'd many a group
Of beauties, that were born
In teacup-times of hood and hoop,
Or while the patch was worn;

'And, leg and arm with love-knots
gay,
About me leap'd and laugh'd
The modish Cupid of the day,
And shrill'd his tinsel shaft.

'I swear (and else may insects prick
Each leaf into a gall)
This girl, for whom your heart is sick,
Is three times worth them all;

'For those and theirs, by Nature's law,
Have faded long ago;
But in these latter springs I saw
Your own Olivia blow,

'From when she gambol'd on the
greens
A baby-germ, to when
The maiden blossoms of her teens
Could number five from ten.

'I swear, by leaf, and wind, and rain,
(And hear me with thine ears,) *That, tho' I circle in the grain*
Five hundred rings of years—

'Yet, since I first could cast a shade,
Did never creature pass
So slightly, musically made,
So light upon the grass:

'For as to fairies, that will flit
To make the greensward fresh,
I hold them exquisitely knit,
But far too spare of flesh.'

Oh, hide thy knotted knees in fern,
And overlook the chase;
And from thy topmost branch discern
The roofs of Summer-place.

But thou, whereon I carved her name,
That oft hast heard my vows,
Declare when last Olivia came
To sport beneath thy boughs.

'O yesterday, you know, the fair
Was holden at the town;
Her father left his good arm-chair,
And rode his hunter down.

'And with him Albert came on his.
I look'd at him with joy:
As cowslip unto oxlip is,
So seems she to the boy.

'An hour had past—and, sitting
straight
Within the low-wheel'd chaise,
Her mother trundled to the gate
Behind the dappled grays.

'But as for her, she stay'd at home,
And on the roof she went,
And down the way you used to come,
She look'd with discontent.

'She left the novel half-uncut
Upon the rosewood shelf;
She left the new piano shut:
She could not please herself.

'Then ran she, gamesome as the colt,
And livelier than a lark

She sent her voice thro' all the holt
Before her, and the park.

'A light wind chased her on the wing,
And in the chase grew wild,
As close as might be would he cling
About the darling child:

'But light as any wind that blows
So fleetly did she stir,
The flower, she touch'd on, dipt and
rose,
And turn'd to look at her.

'And here she came, and round me
play'd,
And sang to me the whole
Of those three stanzas that you made
About my "giant bole;"

'And in a fit of frolic mirth
She strove to span my waist:
Alas, I was so broad of girth,
I could not be embraced.

'I wish'd myself the fair young beech
That here beside me stands,
That round me, clasping each in 'each,
She might have lock'd her hands.

'Yet seem'd the pressure thrice as
sweet
As woodbine's fragile hold,
Or when I feel about my feet
The berried briony fold.'

O muffle round thy knees with fern,
And shadow Summer-chace!
Long may thy topmost branch dis-
cern
The roofs of Summer-place!

But tell me, did she read the name
I carved with many vows
When last with throbbing heart I
came
To rest beneath thy boughs?

'O yes, she wander'd round and round
These knotted knees of mine,
And found, and kiss'd the name she
found,
And sweetly murmur'd thine.

'A teardrop trembled from its source,
And down my surface crept.
My sense of touch is something coarse,
But I believe she wept.

'Then flush'd her cheek with rosy
light,
She glanced across the plain;
But not a creature was in sight:
She kiss'd me once again.

'Her kisses were so close and kind,
That, trust me on my word,
Hard wood I am, and wrinkled rind,
But yet my sap was stirr'd:

'And even into my inmost ring
A pleasure I discern'd,
Like those blind motions of the
Spring,
That show the year is turn'd.

'Thrice-happy he that may caress
The ringlet's waving balm—
The cushions of whose touch may press
The maiden's tender palm.

'I, rooted here among the groves
But languidly adjust
My vapid vegetable loves
With anthers and with dust:

'For ah! my friend, the days were
brief
Whereof the poets talk,
When that, which breathes within the
leaf,
Could slip its bark and walk.

'But could I, as in times foregone,
From spray, and branch, and stem,
Have suck'd and gather'd into one
The life that spreads in them,

'She had not found me so remiss;
But lightly issuing thro',
I would have paid her kiss for kiss,
With usury thereto.'

O flourish high, with leafy towers,
And overlook the lea,
Pursue thy loves among the bowers
But leave thou mine to me.

O flourish, hidden deep in fern,
Old oak, I love thee well;
A thousand thanks for what I learn
And what remains to tell.

'Tis little more: the day was warm;
At last, tired out with play,
She sank her head upon her arm
And at my feet she lay.

'Her eyelids dropp'd their silken
caves.
I breathed upon her eyes
Thro' all the summer of my leaves
A welcome mix'd with sighs.

'I took the swarming sound of
life—
The music from the town—
The murmurs of the drum and fife
And lull'd them in my own.

'Sometimes I let a sunbeam slip,
To light her shaded eye;
A second flutter'd round her lip
Like a golden butterfly;

'A third would glimmer on her
neck
To make the necklace shine;
Another slid, a sunny fleck,
From head to ankle fine,

'Then close and dark my arms I
spread,
And shadow'd all her rest—
Dropt dews upon her golden head,
An acorn in her breast.

'But in a pet she started up,
And pluck'd it out, and drew
My little oakling from the cup,
And flung him in the dew.

'And yet it was a graceful gift—
I felt a pang within
As when I see the woodman lift
His axe to slay my kin.

'I shook him down because he was
The finest on the tree.
He lies beside thee on the grass.
O kiss him once for me.

'O kiss him twice and thrice for me,
That have no lips to kiss,
For never yet was oak on lea
Shall grow so fair as this.'

Step deeper yet in herb and fern,
Look further thro' the chace,
Spread upward till thy boughs discern
The front of Summer-place.

This fruit of thine by Love is blest,
That but a moment lay
Where fairer fruit of Love may rest
Some happy future day.

I kiss it twice, I kiss it thrice,
The warmth it thence shall win
To ripen life may magnetize
The baby-oak within.

But thou, while kingdoms overset,
Or lapse from hand to hand,
Thy leaf shall never fail, nor yet
Thine acorn in the land.

May never saw dismember thee,
Nor wielded axe disjoint,
That art the fairest-spoken tree
From here to Lizard-point.

O rock upon thy towery-top
All throats that gurgle sweet!
All starry culmination drop
Balm-dews to bathe thy feet!

All grass of silky feather grow—
And while he sinks or swells
The full south-breeze around thee
blow
The sound of minster bells.

The fat earth feed thy branchy root,
That under deeply strikes!
The northern morning o'er thee shoot,
High up, in silver spikes!

Nor ever lightning char thy grain,
But, rolling as in sleep,
Low thunders bring the mellow rain,
That makes thee broad and deep!

And hear me swear a solemn oath,
That only by thy side

Will I to Olive plight my troth,
And gain her for my bride.

And when my marriage morn may fall,
She, Dryad-like, shall wear
Alternate leaf and acorn-ball
In wreath about her hair.

And I will work in prose and rhyme,
And praise thee more in both
Than bard has honor'd beech or lime,
Or that Thessalian growth,

In which the swarthy ringdove sat,
And mystic sentence spoke;
And more than England honors that,
Thy famous brother-oak,

Wherein the younger Charles abode
Till all the paths were dim,
And far below the Roundhead rode,
And humm'd a surly hymn.

LOVE AND DUTY.

Of love that never found his earthly
close,
What sequel? Streaming eyes and
breaking hearts?

Or all the same as if he had not been?
Not so. Shall Error in the round
of time

Still father Truth? O shall the
braggart shout

For some blind glimpse of freedom
work itself

Thro' madness, hated by the wise, to
law

System and empire? Sin itself be
found

The cloudy porch oft opening on the
Sun?

And only he, this wonder, dead,
become

Mere highway dust? or year by year
alone

Sit brooding in the ruins of a life,
Nightmare of youth, the spectre of
himself?

If this were thus, if this, indeed,
were all,

Better the narrow brain, the stony
heart,
The staring eye glazed o'er with sap-
less days,
The long mechanic paces to and
fro,
The set gray life, and apathetic end.
But am I not the nobler thro' thy
love?

O three times less unworthy! likewise
thou
Art more thro' Love, and greater
than thy years,
The Sun will run his orbit, and the
Moon

Her circle. Wait, and Love himself
will bring
The drooping flower of knowledge
changed to fruit

Of wisdom. Wait: my faith is large
in Time,
And that which shapes it to some
perfect end.

Will some one say, Then why not
ill for good?

Why took ye not your pastime? To
that man

My work shall answer, since I knew
the right

And did it; for a man is not as God,
But then most Godlike being most a
man.

—So let me think 'tis well for thee
and me—

Ill-fated that I am, what lot is mine
Whose foresight preaches peace, my
heart so slow

To feel it! For how hard it seem'd
to me,

When eyes, love-languid thro' half
tears would dwell

One earnest, earnest moment upon
mine,

Then not to dare to see! when thy
low voice,

Faltering, would break its syllables,
to keep

My own full-tuned,—hold passion in a
leash,

And not leap forth and fall about thy
neck,

And on thy bosom (deep desired re-
lief!)

Rain out the heavy mist of tears, that
weigh'd
Upon my brain, my senses and my
soul!

For Love himself took part against
himself

To warn us off, and Duty loved of
Love—

O this world's curse,—beloved but
hated—came

Like Death betwixt thy dear embrace
and mine,

And crying, 'Who is this? behold
thy bride,'

She push'd me from thee.

If the sense is hard
To alien ears, I did not speak to
these—

No, not to thee, but to thyself in
me:

Hard is my doom and thine: thou
knowest it all.

Could Love part thus? was it not
well to speak,

To have spoken once? It could not
but be well.

The slow sweet hours that bring us
all things good,

The slow sad hours that bring us all
things ill,

And all good things from evil, brought
the night

In which we sat together and alone,
And to the want, that hollow'd all the

heart,
Gave utterance by the yearning of an

eye,
That burn'd upon its object thro' such

tears
As flow but once a life.

The trance gave way
To those caresses, when a hundred

times
In that last kiss, which never was the

last,
Farewell, like endless welcome, lived

and died.
Then follow'd counsel, comfort, and

the words
That make a man feel strong in

speaking truth;
Till now the dark was worn, and over-

head

The lights of sunset and of sunrise
mix'd

In that brief night; the summer night,
that paused

Among her stars to hear us; stars
that hung

Love-charm'd to listen: all the wheels
of Time

Spun round in station, but the end
had come.

O then like those, who clench their
nerves to rush

Upon their dissolution, we two rose,
There—closing like an individual

life—
In one blind cry of passion and of pain,

Like bitter accusation ev'n to death,
Caught up the whole of love and

utter'd it,
And bade adieu for ever.

Live—yet live—
Shall sharpest pathos blight us,

knowing all
Life needs for life is possible to will—

Live happy; tend thy flowers; be
tended by

My blessing! Should my Shadow
cross thy thoughts

Too sadly for their peace, remand it
thou

For calmer hours to Memory's dark-
est hold,

If not to be forgotten—not at once—
Not all forgotten. Should it cross thy

dreams,
O might it come like one that looks

content,
With quiet eyes unfaithful to the

truth,
And point thee forward to a distant

light,
Or seem to lift a burthen from thy

heart
And leave thee freer, till thou wake

refresh'd
Then when the first low matin-chirp

bath grown
Full quire, and morning driv'n her

plow of pearl
Far furrowing into light the mounded

rack,
Beyond the fair green field and east-

ern sea.

THE GOLDEN YEAR.

WELL, you shall have that song which
Leonard wrote:

It was last summer on a tour in
Wales:

Old James was with me: we that day
had been

Up Snowdon; and I wish'd for Leon-
ard there,

And found him in Llanberis: then we
crost

Between the lakes, and clamber'd half
way up

The counter side; and that same song
of his

He told me; for I banter'd him, and
swore

They said he lived shut up within
himself,

A tongue-tied Poet in the feverous
days,

That, setting the *how much* before the
how,

Cry, like the daughters of the horse-
leech, 'Give,

Cram us with all,' but count not me
the herd!

To which 'They call me what they
will,' he said:

'But I was born too late: the fair
new forms,

That float about the threshold of an
age,

Like truths of Science waiting to be
caught—

Catch me who can, and make the
catcher crown'd—

Are taken by the forelock. Let it be.
But if you care indeed to listen, hear

These measured words, my work of
yesternorn.

'We sleep and wake and sleep, but
all things move;

The Sun flies forward to his brother
Sun;

The dark Earth follows wheel'd in
her ellipse;

And human things returning on them-
selves

Move onward, leading up the golden
year.

'Ah, tho' the times, when some
new thought can bud,
Are but as poets' seasons when they
flower,

Yet oceans daily gaining on the land,
I have ebb and flow conditioning their
march,
And slow and sure comes up the
golden year.

'When wealth no more shall rest
in mounded heaps,
But smit with freer light shall slowly
melt

In many streams to fatten lower lands,
And light shall spread, and man be
liker man

Thro' all the season of the golden
year.

'Shall eagles not be eagles? wrens
be wrens?

If all the world were falcons, what of
that?

The wonder of the eagle were the less,
But he not less the eagle. Happy
days

Roll onward, leading up the golden
year.

'Fly, happy happy sails, and bear
the Press;

Fly happy with the mission of the
Cross;

Knit land to land, and blowing haven-
ward

With silks, and fruits, and spices,
clear of toll,

Enrich the markets of the golden year.

'But we grow old. Ah! when shall
all men's good

Be each man's rule, and universal
Peace

Lie like a shaft of light across the
land,

And like a lane of beams athwart the
sea,

Thro' all the circle of the golden
year?'

Thus far he flow'd, and ended;
whereupon

'Ah, folly!' in mimic cadence an-
swer'd James—

'Ah, folly! for it lies so far away,
Not in our time, nor in our children's
time,

'Tis like the second world to us that
live;

'Twere all as one to fix our hopes on
Heaven

As on this vision of the golden year.'

With that he struck his staff against
the rocks

And broke it,—James,—you know
him,—old, but full

Of force and cholera, and firm upon his
feet,

And like an oaken stock in winter
woods,

O'erflourish'd with the hoary clem-
atis:

Then added, all in heat:

'What stuff is this!

Old writers push'd the happy season
back,—

The more fools they,—we forward:
dreamers both:

You most, that in an age, when every
hour

Must sweat her sixty minutes to the
death,

Live on, God love us, as if the seeds-
man, rapt

Upon the teeming harvest, should not
plunge

His hand into the bag: but well I
know

That unto him who works, and feels
he works,

This same grand year is ever at the
doors.'

He spoke; and, high above, I heard
them blast

The steep slate-quarry, and the great
echo flap

And buffet round the hills, from bluff
to bluff.

ULYSSES.

It little profits that an idle king.

By this still hearth, among these bar-
ren crags,

Match'd with an aged wife, I mete
and dole

Unequal laws unto a savage race,

That hoard, and sleep, and feed and
know not me.

I cannot rest from travel: I will drink
Life to the lees: all times I have en-
joy'd

Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both
with those
That loved me, and alone; on shore,
and when

Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades

Vext the dim sea: I am become a
name;

For always roaming with a hungry
heart

Much have I seen and known; cities
of men

And manners, climates, councils, gov-
ernments,

Myself not least, but honor'd of them
all;

And drunk delight of battle with my
peers,

Far on the ringing plains of windy
Troy.

I am a part of all that I have met;
Yet all experience is an arch where-
thro'

Gleams that untravell'd world, whose
margin fades

For ever and for ever when I move.

How dull it is to pause, to make an
end,

To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in
use!

As though to breathe were life. Life
piled on life

Were all too little, and of one to me
Little remains: but every hour is saved

From that eternal silence, something
more,

A bringer of new things; and vile it
were

For some three suns to store and
hoard myself,

And this gray spirit yearning in desire
To follow knowledge like a sinking

star,

Beyond the utmost bound of human
thought.

This is my son, mine own Telema-
chus,

To whom I leave the sceptre and the
isle—

Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil

This labor, by slow prudence to make
mild

A rugged people, and thro' soft de-
grees

Subdue them to the useful and the
good.

Most blameless is he, centred in the
sphere

Of common duties, decent not to fail
In offices of tenderness, and pay

Meet adoration to my household gods,
When I am gone. He works his

work, I mine.

There lies the port; the vessel
puffs her sail:

There gloom the dark broad seas.
My mariners,

Souls that have toil'd, and wrought,
and thought with me—

That ever with a frolic welcome took
The thunder and the sunshine, and op-
posed

Free hearts, free foreheads—you and
I are old;

Old age hath yet his honor and his
toil;

Death closes all: but something ere
the end,

Some work of noble note, may yet be
done,

Not unbecoming men that strove with
Gods.

The lights begin to twinkle from the
rocks:

The long day wanes: the slow moon
climbs: the deep

Moans round with many voices.
Come, my friends,

'Tis not too late to seek a newer
world.

Push off, and sitting well in order
smite

The sounding furrows; for my pur-
pose holds

To sail beyond the sunset, and the
baths

Of all the western stars, until I die.
It may be that the gulfs will wash us

down:

It may be we shall touch the Happy
Isles,

And see the great Achilles, whom we
knew.



- All in the mad March-morning I
heard the angels call;
It was when the moon was setting, and
the dark was over all



1872



Tho' much is taken, much abides; and
 tho'
 We are not now that strength which
 in old days
 Moved earth and heaven; that which
 we are, we are;
 One equal temper of heroic hearts,
 Made weak by time and fate, but
 strong in will
 To strive, to seek, to find, and not to
 yield.

TITHONUS.

THE woods decay, the woods decay
 and fall,
 The vapors weep their burthen to the
 ground,
 Man comes and tills the field and lies
 beneath,
 And after many a summer dies the
 swan.
 Me only cruel immortality
 Consumes: I wither slowly in thine
 arms,
 Here at the quiet limit of the world,
 A white-hair'd shadow roaming like a
 dream
 The ever-silent spaces of the East,
 Far-folded mists, and gleaming halls
 of morn.

Alas! for this gray shadow, once a
 man—
 So glorious in his beauty and thy
 choice,
 Who madest him thy chosen, that he
 seem'd
 To his great heart none other than a
 God!
 I ask'd thee, 'Give me immortality.'
 Then didst thou grant mine asking
 with a smile,
 Like wealthy men who care not how
 they give.
 But thy strong Hours indignant
 work'd their wills,
 And beat me down and marr'd and
 wasted me,
 And tho' they could not end me, left
 me maim'd

To dwell in presence of immortal
 youth,
 Immortal age beside immortal youth,
 And all I was, in ashes. Can thy
 love,
 Thy beauty, make amends, tho' even
 now,
 Close over us, the silver star, thy
 guide,
 Shines in those tremulous eyes that
 fill with tears
 To hear me? Let me go: take back
 thy gift:
 Why should a man desire in any
 way
 To vary from the kindly race of
 men,
 Or pass beyond the goal of ordinance
 Where all should pause, as is most
 meet for all?

A soft air fans the cloud apart;
 there comes
 A glimpse of that dark world where I
 was born.
 Once more the old mysterious glim-
 mer steals
 From thy pure brows, and from thy
 shoulders pure,
 And bosom beating with a heart
 renew'd.
 Thy cheek begins to redden thro' the
 gloom,
 Thy sweet eyes brighten slowly close
 to mine,
 Ere yet they blind the stars, and the
 wild team
 Which love thee, yearning for thy
 yoke, arise,
 And shake the darkness from their
 loosen'd manes,
 And beat the twilight into flakes of
 fire.

Lo! ever thus thou growest beauti-
 ful
 In silence, then before thine answer
 given
 Departest, and thy tears are on my
 cheek.

Why wilt thou ever scare me with
 thy tears,

And make me tremble lest a saying
 learnt,
 In days far-off, on that dark earth, be
 true?
 'The Gods themselves cannot recall
 their gifts.'

Ay me ! ay me ! with what another
 heart
 In days far-off, and with what other
 eyes
 I used to watch—if I be he that
 watch'd—
 The lucid outline forming round thee ;
 saw
 The dim curls kindle into sunny
 rings ;
 Changed with thy mystic change, and
 felt my blood
 Glow with the glow that slowly crim-
 son'd all
 Thy presence and thy portals, while I
 lay,
 Mouth, forehead, eyelids, growing
 dewy-warm
 With kisses balmier than half-opening
 buds
 Of April, and could hear the lips that
 kiss'd
 Whispering I knew not what of wild
 and sweet,

Like that strange song I heard Apollo
 sing,
 While Ilion like a mist rose into
 towers.

Yet hold me not for ever in thine
 East :
 How can my nature longer mix with
 thine ?
 Coldly thy rosy shadows bathe me,
 cold
 Are all thy lights, and cold my wrin-
 kled feet
 Upon thy glimmering thresholds,
 when the steam
 Floats up from those dim fields about
 the homes
 Of happy men that have the power to
 die,
 And grassy barrows of the happier
 dead.
 Release me, and restore me to the
 ground ;
 Thou seest all things, thou wilt see
 my grave :
 Thou wilt renew thy beauty morn by
 morn ;
 I earth in earth forget these empty
 courts,
 And thee returning on thy silver
 heels.

LOCKSLEY HALL.

COMRADES, leave me here a little, while as yet 'tis early morn :
 Leave me here, and when you want me, sound upon the bugle-horn.

'Tis the place, and all around it, as of old, the curlews call,
 Dreary gleams about the moorland flying over Locksley Hall ;

Locksley Hall, that in the distance overlooks the sandy tracts,
 And the hollow ocean-ridges roaring into cataracts.

Many a night from yonder ivied casement, ere I went to rest,
 Did I look on great Orion sloping slowly to the West.

Many a night I saw the Pleiads, rising thro' the mellow shade,
 Glitter like a swarm of fire-flies tangled in a silver braid.

Here about the beach I wander'd, nourishing a youth sublime
 With the fairy tales of science, and the long result of Time ;

When the centuries behind me like a fruitful land reposed ;
When I clung to all the present for the promise that it, closed :

When I dipt into the future far as human eye could see ;
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be.

In the Spring a fuller crimson comes upon the robin's breast ;
In the Spring the wanton lapwing gets himself another crest ;

In the Spring a livelier iris changes on the burnish'd dove ;
In the Spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love.

Then her cheek was pale and thinner than should be for one so young,
And her eyes on all my motions with a mute observance hung.

And I said, ' My cousin Amy, speak, and speak the truth to me,
Trust me, cousin, all the current of my being sets to thee.'

On her pallid cheek and forehead came a color and a light,
As I have seen the rosy red flushing in the northern night.

And she turn'd—her bosom shaken with a sudden storm of sighs—
All the spirit deeply dawning in the dark of hazel eyes—

Saying, ' I have hid my feelings, fearing they should do me wrong ;'
Saying, ' Dost thou love me, cousin ?' weeping, ' I have loved thee long.'

Love took up the glass of Time, and turn'd it in his glowing hands ;
Every moment, lightly shaken, ran itself in golden sands.

Love took up the harp of Life, and smote on all the chords with might ;
Smote the chord of Self, that, trembling, pass'd in music out of sight.

Many a morning on the moorland did we hear the copses ring,
And her whisper throng'd my pulses with the fulness of the Spring.

Many an evening by the waters did we watch the stately ships,
And our spirits rush'd together at the touching of the lips.

O my cousin, shallow-hearted ! O my Amy, mine no more !
O the dreary, dreary moorland ! O the barren, barren shore !

Falser than all fancy fathoms, falser than all songs have sung,
Puppet to a father's threat, and servile to a shrewish tongue !

Is it well to wish thee happy ?—having known me—to decline
On a range of lower feelings and a narrower heart than mine !

Yet it shall be : thou shalt lower to his level day by day,
What is fine within thee growing coarse to sympathize with clay.

As the husband is, the wife is : thou art mated with a clown,
And the grossness of his nature will have weight to drag thee down.

He will hold thee, when his passion shall have spent its novel force,
Something better than his dog, a little dearer than his horse.

What is this? his eyes are heavy: think not they are glazed with wine.
Go to him: it is thy duty: kiss him: take his hand in thine.

It may be my lord is weary, that his brain is overwrought:
Soothe him with thy finer fancies, touch him with thy lighter thought.

He will answer to the purpose, easy things to understand—
Better thou wert dead before me, tho' I slew thee with my hand!

Better thou and I were lying, hidden from the heart's disgrace,
Roll'd in one another's arms, and silent in a last embrace.

Cursed be the social wants that sin against the strength of youth!
Cursed be the social lies that warp us from the living truth!

Cursed be the sickly forms that err from honest Nature's rule!
Cursed be the gold that gilds the straiten'd forehead of the fool!

Well—'tis well that I should bluster!—Hadst thou less unworthy proved—
Would to God—for I had loved thee more than ever wife was loved.

Am I mad, that I should cherish that which bears but bitter fruit?
I will pluck it from my bosom, tho' my heart be at the root.

Never, tho' my mortal summers to such length of years should come
As the many-winter'd crow that leads the clanging rookery home.

Where is comfort? in division of the records of the mind?
Can I part her from herself, and love her, as I knew her, kind?

I remember one that perish'd: sweetly did she speak and move:
Such a one do I remember, whom to look at was to love.

Can I think of her as dead, and love her for the love she bore?
No—she never loved me truly: love is love for evermore.

Comfort? comfort scorn'd of devils! this is truth the poet sings,
That a sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier things.

Drug thy memories, lest thou learn it, lest thy heart be put to proof,
In the dead unhappy night, and when the rain is on the roof.

Like a dog, he hunts in dreams, and thou art staring at the wall,
Where the dying night-lamp flickers, and the shadows rise and fall.

Then a hand shall pass before thee, pointing to his drunken sleep,
To thy widow'd marriage-pillows, to the tears that thou wilt weep.

Thou shalt hear the 'Never, never,' whisper'd by the phantom years,
And a song from out the distance in the ringing of thine ears;

And an eye shall vex thee, looking ancient kindness on thy pain.
Turn thee, turn thee on thy pillow : get thee to thy rest again.

Nay, but Nature brings thee solace ; for a tender voice will cry.
'Tis a purer life than thine ; a lip to drain thy trouble dry.

Baby lips will laugh me down : my latest rival brings thee rest.
Baby fingers, waxen touches, press me from the mother's breast.

O, the child too clothes the father with a dearness not his due.
Half is thine and half is his : it will be worthy of the two.

O, I see thee old and formal, fitted to thy petty part,
With a little hoard of maxims preaching down a daughter's heart.

' They were dangerous guides the feelings—she herself was not exempt—
Truly, she herself had suffer'd '—Perish in thy self-contempt !

Overlive it—lower yet—be happy ! wherefore should I care ?
I myself must mix with action, lest I wither by despair.

What is that which I should turn to, lighting upon days like these ?
Every door is barr'd with gold, and opens but to golden keys.

Every gate is throng'd with suitors, all the markets overflow,
I have but an angry fancy : what is that which I should do ?

I had been content to perish, falling on the foeman's ground,
When the ranks are roll'd in vapor, and the winds are laid with sound.

But the jingling of the guinea helps the hurt that Honor feels,
And the nations do but murmur, snarling at each other's heels.

Can I but relive in sadness ? I will turn that earlier page.
Hide me from my deep emotion, O thou wondrous Mother-Age !

Make me feel the wild pulsation that I felt before the strife,
When I heard my days before me, and the tumult of my life ;

Yearning for the large excitement that the coming years would yield,
Eager-hearted as a boy when first he leaves his father's field,

And at night along the dusky highway near and nearer drawn,
Sees in heaven the light of London flaring like a dreary dawn ;

And his spirit leaps within him to be gone before him then,
Underneath the light he looks at, in among the throngs of men :

Men, my brothers, men the workers, ever reaping something new :
That which they have done but earnest of the things that they shall do :

For I dipt into the future, far as human eye could see,
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be ;

Saw the heavens fill with commerce, argosies of magic sails,
Pilots of the purple twilight, dropping down with costly bales ;

Heard the heavens fill with shouting, and there rain'd a ghastly dew
From the nations' airy navies grappling in the central blue ;

Far along the world-wide whisper of the south-wind rushing warm,
With the standards of the peoples plunging thro' the thunder-storm ;

Till the war-drum throb'd no longer, and the battle-flags were furl'd
In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the world.

There the common sense of most shall hold a fretful realm in awe,
And the kindly earth shall slumber, lapt in universal law.

So I triumph'd ere my passion sweeping thro' me left me dry,
Left me with the palsied heart, and left me with the jaundiced eye ;

Eye, to which all order festers, all things here are out of joint :
Science moves, but slowly slowly, creeping on from point to point :

Slowly comes a hungry people, as a lion creeping nigher,
Glares at one that nods and winks behind a slowly-dying fire.

Yet I doubt not thro' the ages one increasing purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widen'd with the process of the suns.

What is that to him that reaps not harvest of his youthful joys,
Tho' the deep heart of existence beat forever like a boy's ?

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and I linger on the shore,
And the individual withers, and the world is more and more.

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and he bears a laden breast,
Full of sad experience, moving toward the stillness of his rest.

Hark, my merry comrades call me, sounding on the bugle-horn,
They to whom my foolish passion were a target for their scorn :

Shall it not be scorn to me to harp on such a moulder'd string ?
I am shamed thro' all my nature to have loved so slight a thing.

Weakness to be wroth with weakness ! woman's pleasure, woman's pain—
Nature made them blinder motions bounded in a shallower brain :

Woman is the lesser man, and all thy passions, match'd with mine,
Are as moonlight unto sunlight, and as water unto wine—

Here at least, where nature sickens, nothing. Ah, for some retreat
Deep in yonder shining Orient, where my life began to beat ;

Where in wild Mahratta-battle fell my father evil-starr'd ;—
I was left a trampled orphan, and a selfish uncle's ward.

Or to burst all links of habit—there to wander far away,
On from island unto island at the gateways of the day.

Larger constellations burning, mellow moons and happy skies,
Breadths of tropic shade and palms in cluster, knots of Paradise.

Never comes the trader, never floats an European flag,
Slides the bird o'er lustrous woodland, swings the trailer from the crag ;

Droops the heavy-blossom'd bower, hangs the heavy-fruited tree—
Summer isles of Eden lying in dark-purple spheres of sea.

There methinks would be enjoyment more than in this march of mind,
In the steamship, in the railway, in the thoughts that shake mankind.

There the passions cramp'd no longer shall have scope and breathing space ;
I will take some savage woman, she shall rear my dusky race.

Iron jointed, supple-sinew'd, they shall dive, and they shall run,
Catch the wild goat by the hair, and hurl their lances in the sun ;

Whistle back the parrot's call, and leap the rainbows of the brooks,
Not with blinded eyesight poring over miserable books—

Fool, again the dream, the fancy ! but I *know* my words are wild,
But I count the gray barbarian lower than the Christian child.

I, to herd with narrow foreheads, vacant of our glorious gains,
Like a beast with lower pleasures, like a beast with lower pains !

Mated with a squalid savage—what to me were sun or clime ?
I the heir of all the ages, in the foremost files of time—

I that rather held it better men should perish one by one,
Than that earth should stand at gaze like Joshua's moon in Ajalon !

Not in vain the distance beacons. Forward, forward let us range,
Let the great world spin for ever down the ringing grooves of change.

Thro' the shadow of the globe we sweep into the younger day :
Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay.

Mother-Age (for mine I knew not) help me as when life begun :
Rift the hills, and roll the waters, flash the lightnings, weigh the Sun.

O, I see the crescent promise of my spirit hath not set.
Ancient founts of inspiration well thro' all my fancy yet.

Howsoever these things be, a long farewell to Locksley Hall !
Now for me the woods may wither, now for me the roof-tree fall.

Comes a vapor from the margin, blackening over heath and holt,
Cramming all the blast before it, in its breast a thunderbolt.

Let it fall on Locksley Hall, with rain or hail, or fire or snow ;
For the mighty wind arises, roaring seaward, and I go.

GODIVA.

*I waited for the train at Coventry ;
I hung with grooms and porters on the
bridge,*

*To watch the three tall spires ; and
there I shaped*

The city's ancient legend into this :—

Not only we, the latest seed of
Time,

New men, that in the flying of a wheel
Cry down the past, not only we, that
prate

Of rights and wrongs, have loved the
people well,

And loathed to see them overtax'd ;
but she

Did more, and underwent, and over-
came,

The woman of a thousand summers
back,

Godiva, wife to that grim Earl, who
ruled

In Coventry : for when he laid a tax
Upon his town, and all the mothers
brought

Their children, clamoring, ' If we pay,
we starve ! '

She sought her lord, and found him,
where he strode

About the hall, among his dogs, alone,
His beard a foot before him, and his
hair

A yard behind. She told him of their
tears,

And pray'd him, ' If they pay this tax,
they starve. '

Whereat he stared, replying, half-
amazed,

' You would not let your little finger
ache

For such as *these* ? '—' But I would
die, ' said she.

He laugh'd, and swore by Peter and
by Paul :

Then filip'd at the diamond in her ear ;
' Oh ay, ay, ay, you talk ! '—' Alas ! '

she said,

' But prove me what it is I would not
do. '

And from a heart as rough as Esau's
hand,

He answer'd, ' Ride you naked thro'
the town,
And I repeal it ; ' and nodding, as in
scorn,

He parted, with great strides among
his dogs.

So left alone, the passions of her
mind,

As winds from all the compass shift
and blow,

Made war upon each other for an hour,
Till pity won. She sent a herald forth,

And bade him cry, with sound of
trumpet, all

The hard condition ; but that she
would loose

The people : therefore, as they loved
her well,

From then till noon no foot should
pace the street,

No eye look down, she passing ; but
that all

Should keep within, door shut, and
window barr'd.

Then fled she to her inmost bower,
and there

Unclasp'd the wedded eagles of her
belt,

The grim Earl's gift ; but ever at a
breath

She linger'd, looking like a summer
moon

Half-dipt in cloud : anon she shook
her head,

And shower'd the rippled ringlets to
her knee ;

Unclad herself in haste ; adown the
stair

Stole on ; and, like a creeping sun-
beam, slid

From pillar unto pillar, until she
reach'd

The gateway ; there she found her
palfrey trapt

In purple blazon'd with armorial gold.
Then she rode forth, clothed on

with chastity :

The deep air listen'd round her as she
rode,

And all the low wind hardly breathed
for fear.

The little wide-mouth'd heads upon
the spout

Had cunning eyes to see : the barking
cur
Made her cheek flame : her palfrey's
foot-fall shot
Light horrors thro' her pulses : the
blind walls
Were full of chinks and holes ; and
overhead
Fantastic gables, crowding, stared :
but she
Not less thro' all bore up, till, last, she
saw
The white-flower'd elder-thicket from
the field
Gleam thro' the Gothic archway in the
wall.
Then she rode back, clothed on with
chastity :
And one low churl, compact of thank-
less earth,
The fatal byword of all years to come,
Boring a little auger-hole in fear,
Peep'd—but his eyes, before they had
their will,
Were shrivell'd into darkness in his
head,
And dropt before him. So the
Powers, who wait
On noble deeds, cancell'd a sense
misused ;
And she, that knew not, pass'd : and
all at once,
With twelve great shocks of sound,
the shameless noon
Was clash'd and hammer'd from a
hundred towers,
One after one : but even then she
gain'd
Her bower : whence, reissuing, robed
and crown'd,
To meet her lord, she took the tax
away
And built herself an everlasting name.

THE DAY-DREAM.

PROLOGUE.

O LADY FLORA, let me speak :
A pleasant hour has passed away
While, dreaming on your damask
cheek,

The dewy sister-eyelids lay.
As by the lattice you reclined,
I went thro' many wayward moods
To see you dreaming—and, behind,
A summer crisp with shining woods.
And I too dream'd, until at last
Across my fancy, brooding warm,
The reflex of a legend past,
And loosely settled into form.
And would you have the thought I
had,
And see the vision that I saw,
Then take the broidery-frame, and add
A crimson to the quaint Macaw,
And I will tell it. Turn your face,
Nor look with that too-earnest eye—
The rhymes are dazzled from their
place
And order'd words asunder fly.

THE SLEEPING PALACE.

I.

THE varying year with blade and
sheaf
Clothes and re-clothes the happy
plains,
Here rests the sap within the leaf,
Here stays the blood along the
veins.
Faint shadows, vapors lightly curl'd,
Faint murmurs from the meadows
come,
Like hints and echoes of the world
To spirits folded in the womb.

II.

Soft lustre bathes the range of urns
On every slanting terrace-lawn.
The fountain to his place returns
Deep in the garden lake withdrawn.
Here droops the banner on the tower,
On the hall-hearths the festal fires,
The peacock in his laurel bower,
The parrot in his gilded wires.

III.

Roof-haunting martins warm their
eggs :
In these, in those the life is stay'd.

The mantles from the golden pegs
Droop sleepily: no sound is made,
Not even of a gnat that sings.
More like a picture seemeth all
Than those old portraits of old kings,
That watch the sleepers from the
wall.

IV.

Here sits the Butler with a flask
Between his knees, half-drain'd;
and there
The wrinkled steward at his task,
The maid-of-honor blooming fair;
The page has caught her hand in his:
Her lips are sever'd as to speak:
His own are pouted to a kiss:
The blush is fix'd upon her cheek.

V.

Till all the hundred summers pass,
The beams, that thro' the Oriel
shine,
Make prisms in every carven glass,
And beaker brimm'd with noble
wine.
Each baron at the banquet sleeps,
Grave faces gather'd in a ring.
His state the king reposing keeps.
He must have been a jovial king.

VI.

All round a hedge upshoots, and
shows
At distance like a little wood;
Thorns, ivies, woodbine, mistletoes,
And grapes with bunches red as
blood;
All creeping plants, a wall of green
Close-matted, bur and brake and
briar,
And glimpsing over these, just seen,
High up, the topmost palace spire.

VII.

When will the hundred summers die,
And thought and time be born
again,
And newer knowledge, drawing nigh,
Bring truth that sways the soul of
men?

Here all things in their place re-
main,
As all were order'd, ages since.
Come, Care and Pleasure, Hope and
Pain,
And bring the fated fairy Prince.

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY.

I.

YEAR after year unto her feet,
She lying on her couch alone,
Across the purple coverlet,
The maiden's jet-black hair has
grown,
On either side her tranced form
Forth streaming from a braid of
pearl:
The slumbrous light is rich and warm,
And moves not on the rounded
curl.

II.

The silk star-broider'd coverlid
Unto her limbs itself doth mould
Languidly ever; and, amid
Her full black ringlets downward
roll'd,
Glow forth each softly-shadow'd
arm
With bracelets of the diamond
bright:
Her constant beauty doth inform
Stillness with love, and day with
light.

III.

She sleeps: her breathings are not
heard
In palace chambers far apart.
The fragrant tresses are not stirr'd
That lie upon her charmed heart.
She sleeps: on either hand upswells
The gold-fringed pillow lightly
prest:
She sleeps, nor dreams, but ever
dwells
A perfect form in perfect rest.

THE ARRIVAL.

I.

ALL precious things, discover'd late,
To those that seek them issue forth;
For love in sequel works with fate,
And draws the veil from hidden worth.
He travels far from other skies—
His mantle glitters on the rocks—
A fairy Prince, with joyful eyes,
And lighter-footed than the fox.

II.

The bodies and the bones of those
That strove in other days to pass,
Are wither'd in the thorny close,
Or scatter'd blanching on the grass.
He gazes on the silent dead:
'They perish'd in their daring deeds.'
This proverb flashes thro' his head,
'The many fail: the one succeeds.'

III.

He comes, scarce knowing what he seeks:
He breaks the hedge: he enters there:
The color flies into his cheeks:
He trusts to light on something fair;
For all his life the charm did talk
About his path, and hover near
With words of promise in his walk,
And whisper'd voices at his ear.

IV.

More close and close his footsteps wind:
The Magic Music in his heart
Beats quick and quicker, till he find
The quiet chamber far apart.
His spirit flutters like a lark,
He stoops—to kiss her—on his knee.
'Love, if thy tresses be so dark,
How dark those hidden eyes must be!'

THE REVIVAL.

I.

A TOUCH, a kiss! the charm was snapt.
There rose a noise of striking clocks,
And feet that ran, and doors that clapt,
And barking dogs, and crowing cocks;
A fuller light illumined all,
A breeze thro' all the garden swept,
A sudden hubbub shook the hall,
And sixty feet the fountain leapt.

II.

The hedge broke in, the banner blew,
The butler drank, the steward scrawl'd,
The fire shot up, the martin flew,
The parrot scream'd, the peacock squall'd,
The maid and page renew'd their strife,
The palace bang'd, and buzz'd and clackt,
And all the long-pent stream of life
Dash'd downward in a cataract.

III.

And last with these the king awoke,
And in his chair himself uprear'd,
And yawn'd, and rubb'd his face, and spoke,
'By holy rood, a royal beard!
How say you? we have slept, my lords.
My beard has grown into my lap.'
The barons swore, with many words,
'Twas but an after-dinner's nap.

IV.

'Pardy,' return'd the king, 'but still
My joints are somewhat stiff or so.
My lord, and shall we pass the bill
I mention'd half an hour ago?'
The chancellor, sedate and vain,
In courteous words return'd reply:
But dallied with his golden chain,
And, smiling, put the question by.

THE DEPARTURE.

I.

AND on her lover's arm she leant,
 And round her waist she felt it fold,
 And far across the hills they went
 In that new world which is the old:
 Across the hills, and far away
 Beyond their utmost purple rim,
 And deep into the dying day
 The happy princess follow'd him.

II.

'I'd sleep another hundred years,
 O love, for such another kiss;
 'O wake for ever, love,' she hears,
 'O love, 'twas such as this and this.'
 And o'er them many a sliding star,
 And many a merry wind was borne,
 And, stream'd thro' many a golden bar,
 The twilight melted into morn.

III:

'O eyes long laid in happy sleep!
 'O happy sleep, that lightly fled!
 'O happy kiss, that woke thy sleep!
 'O love, thy kiss would wake the dead!
 And o'er them many a flowing range
 Of vapor buoy'd the crescent-bark,
 And, rapt thro' many a rosy change,
 The twilight died into the dark.

IV.

'A hundred summers! can it be?
 And whither goest thou, tell me where?'
 'O seek my father's court with me,
 For there are greater wonders there.'
 And o'er the hills, and far away
 Beyond their utmost purple rim,
 Beyond the night, across the day,
 Thro' all the world she follow'd him.

MORAL.

I.

So, Lady Flora, take my lay,
 And if you find no moral there,
 Go, look in any glass and say,
 What moral is in being fair.
 Oh, to what uses shall we put
 The wildweed-flower that simply blows?
 And is there any moral shut
 Within the bosom of the rose?

II.

But any man that walks the mead,
 In bud or blade, or bloom, may find,
 According as his humors lead,
 A meaning suited to his mind.
 And liberal applications lie
 In Art like Nature, dearest friend;
 So 'twere to cramp its use, if I
 Should hook it to some useful end.

L'ENVOI.

I.

YOU shake your head. A random string
 Your finer female sense offends.
 Well—were it not a pleasant thing
 To fall asleep with all one's friends;
 To pass with all our social ties
 To silence from the paths of men;
 And every hundred years to rise
 And learn the world, and sleep again;
 To sleep thro' terms of mighty wars,
 And wake on science grown to more,
 On secrets of the brain, the stars,
 As wild as aught of fairy lore;
 And all that else the years will show,
 The Poet-forms of stronger hours,
 The vast Republics that may grow,
 The Federations and the Powers;
 Titanic forces taking birth
 In divers seasons, divers climes;
 For we are Ancients of the earth,
 And in the morning of the times.

II.

So sleeping, so aroused from sleep
Thro' sunny decads new and strange,
Or gay quinqueniads would we
 reap
The flower and quintessence of
 change.

III.

Ah, yet would I—and would I might !
So much your eyes my fancy
 take—
Be still the first to leap to light
That I might kiss those eyes awake !
For, am I right, or am I wrong,
To choose your own you did not
 care ;
You'd have *my* moral from the song,
And I will take my pleasure there :
And, am I right or am I wrong,
My fancy, ranging thro' and thro',
To search a meaning for the song,
Perforce will still revert to you ;
Nor finds a closer truth than this
All-graceful head, so richly curl'd,
And evermore a costly kiss
The prelude to some brighter
 world.

IV.

For since the time when Adam first
Embraced his Eve in happy hour,
And every bird of Eden burst
In carol, every bud to flower,
What eyes, like thine, have waken'd
 hopes,
What lips, like thine, so sweetly
 join'd ?
Where on the double rosebud droops
The fulness of the pensive mind ;
Which all too dearly self-involved,
Yet sleeps a dreamless sleep to
 me ;
A sleep by kisses undissolved,
That lets thee neither hear nor see :
But break it. In the name of wife,
And in the rights that name may
 give,
Are clasp'd the moral of thy life,
And that for which I care to live.

EPILOGUE.

So, Lady Flora, take my lay,
And, if you find a meaning there,
O whisper to your glass, and say,
'What wonder, if he thinks me
 fair ?'
What wonder I was all unwise,
To shape the song for your delight
Like long-tail'd birds of Paradise
That float thro' Heaven, and can-
 not light ?
Or old-world trains, upheld at court
By Cupid-boys of blooming hue—
But take it—earnest wed with sport,
And either sacred unto you.

AMPHION.

My father left a park to me,
But it is wild and barren,
A garden too with scarce a tree,
And waster than a warren :
Yet say the neighbors when they call,
It is not bad but good land,
And in it is the germ of all
That grows within the woodland.

O had I lived when song was great
In days of old Amphion,
And ta'en my fiddle to the gate,
Nor cared for seed or scion !
And had I lived when song was great,
And legs of trees were limber,
And ta'en my fiddle to the gate,
And fiddled in the timber !

'Tis said he had a tuneful tongue,
Such happy intonation,
Wherever he sat down and sung
He left a small plantation ;
Wherever in a lonely grove
He set up his forlorn pipes,
The gouty oak began to move,
And flounder into hornpipes.

The mountain stirr'd its bushy crown,
And, as tradition teaches,
Young ashes pirouetted down
Coquetting with young beeches ;

And briony-vine and ivy-wreath
Ran forward to his rhyming,
And from the valleys underneath
Came little coppers climbing.

The linden broke her ranks and rent
The woodbine wreaths that bind
her,
And down the middle, buzz! she
went
With all her bees behind her:
The poplars, in long order due,
With cypress promenaded,
The shock-head willows two and two
By rivers galloped.

Came wet-shod alder from the wave,
Came yews, a dismal coterie;
Each pluck'd his one foot from the
grave,
Poussetting with a sloe-tree:
Old elms came breaking from the vine,
The vine stream'd out to follow,
And, sweating rosin, plump'd the pine
From many a cloudy hollow.

And wasn't it a sight to see,
When, ere his song was ended,
Like some great landslip, tree by tree,
The country-side descended;
And shepherds from the mountain-
eaves
Look'd down, half-pleased, half-
frighten'd,
As dash'd about the drunken leaves
The random sunshine lighten'd!

Oh, nature first was fresh to men,
And wanton without measure;
So youthful and so flexible then,
You moved her at your pleasure.
Twang out, my fiddle! shake the
twigs!
And make her dance attendance;
Blow, flute, and stir the stiff-set sprigs,
And scirrhous roots and tendons.

'Tis vain! in such a brassy age
I could not move a thistle;
The very sparrows in the hedge
Scarce answer to my whistle;
Or at the most, when three-parts-sick
With strumming and with scraping,

A jackass hechaws from the rick,
The passive oxen gaping.

But what is that I hear? a sound
Like sleepy counsel pleading;
O Lord!—'tis in my neighbor's
ground,
The modern Muses reading.
They read Botanic Treatises,
And Works on Gardening thro'
there,
And Methods of transplanting trees
To look as if they grew there.

The wither'd Misses! how they prose
O'er books of travell'd seamen,
And show you slips of all that grows.
From England to Van Diemen.
They read in arbors clipt and cut,
And alleys, faded places,
By squares of tropic summer shut
And warm'd in crystal cases.

But these, tho' fed with careful dirt,
Are neither green nor sappy;
Half-conscious of the garden-squirt,
The spindlings look unhappy.
Better to me the meanest weed
That blows upon its mountain,
The vilest herb that runs to seed
Beside its native fountain.

And I must work thro' months of toil,
And years of cultivation,
Upon my proper patch of soil
To grow my own plantation.
I'll take the showers as they fall,
I will not vex my bosom:
Enough if at the end of all
A little garden blossom.

ST. AGNES' EVE.

DEEP on the convent-roof the snows
Are sparkling to the moon:
My breath to heaven like vapor goes:
May my soul follow soon!
The shadows of the convent-towers
Slant down the snowy sward,
Still creeping with the creeping hours.
That lead me to my Lord:

Make Thou my spirit pure and clear
As are the frosty skies,
Or this first snowdrop of the year
That in my bosom lies.

As these white robes are soil'd and
dark,

To yonder shining ground;
As this pale taper's earthly spark,
To yonder argent round;
So shows my soul before the Lamb,
My spirit before Thee;
So in mine earthly house I am,
To that I hope to be.
Break up the heavens, O Lord! and
far,

Thro' all yon starlight keen,
Draw me, thy bride, a glittering star,
In raiment white and clean.

He lifts me to the golden doors;
The flashes come and go;
All heaven bursts her starry floors,
And strows her lights below,
And deepens on and up! the gates
Roll back, and far within
For me the Heavenly Bridegroom
waits,

To make me pure of sin.
The sabbaths of Eternity,
One sabbath deep and wide—
A light upon the shining sea—
The Bridegroom with his bride!

SIR GALAHAD.

My good blade carves the casques of
men,

My tough lance thrusteth sure,
My strength is as the strength of ten,
Because my heart is pure.
The shattering trumpet shrilleth high,
The hard brands shiver on the steel,
The splinter'd spear-shafts crack and
fly,

The horse and rider reel:
They reel, they roll in clanging lists,
And when the tide of combat stands,
Perfume and flowers fall in showers,
That lightly rain from ladies' hands.

How sweet are looks that ladies bend
On whom their favors fall!
For them I battle till the end,
To save from shame and thrall:
But all my heart is drawn above,
My knees are bow'd in crypt and
shrine:

I never felt the kiss of love,
Nor maiden's hand in mine.
More bounteous aspects on me beam,
Me mightier transports move and
thrill;
So keep I fair thro' faith and prayer
A virgin heart in work and will.

When down the stormy crescent goes,
A light before me swims,
Between dark stems the forest glows,
I hear a noise of hymns:
Then by some secret shrine I ride;
I hear a voice but none are there;
The stalls are void, the doors are wide,
The tapers burning fair.
Fair gleams the snowy altar-cloth,
The silver vessels sparkle clean,
The shrill bell rings, the censer swings,
And solemn chaunts resound be-
tween.

Sometimes on lonely mountain-meres
I find a magic bark;
I leap on board: no helmsman steers:
I float till all is dark.
A gentle sound, an awful light!
Three angels bear the holy Grail:
With folded feet, in stoles of white,
On sleeping wings they sail.
Ah, blessed vision! blood of God!
My spirit beats her mortal bars,
As down dark tides the glory slides,
And star-like mingles with the stars.

When on my goodly charger borne
Thro' dreaming towns I go,
The cock crows ere the Christmas
morn.
The streets are dumb with snow.
The tempest crackles on the leads,
And, ringing, springs from brand
and mail;
But o'er the dark a glory spreads,
And gilds the driving hail.
I leave the plain, I climb the height;

No branchy thicket shelter yields;
But blessed forms in whistling storms
Fly o'er waste fens and windy fields.

A maiden knight—to me is given
Such hope, I know not fear;
I yearn to breathe the airs of heaven
That often meet me here.
I muse on joy that will not cease,
Pure spaces clothed in living beams,
Pure lilies of eternal peace,
Whose odors haunt my dreams;
And, stricken by an angel's hand,
This mortal armor that I wear,
This weight and size, this heart and
eyes,
Are touch'd, are turn'd to finest air.

The clouds are broken in the sky,
And thro' the mountain-walls
A rolling organ-harmony
Swells up, and shakes and falls.
Then move the trees, the copses nod,
Wings flutter, voices hover clear:
'O just and faithful knight of God!
Ride on! the prize is near.'
So pass I hostel, hall, and grange;
By bridge and ford, by park and
pale,
All-arm'd I ride, whate'er betide,
Until I find the holy Grail.

EDWARD GRAY.

SWEET Emma Moreland of yonder
town

Met me walking on yonder way,
'And have you lost your heart?' she
said;
'And are you married yet, Edward
Gray?'

Sweet Emma Moreland spoke to me:
Bitterly weeping I turn'd away:
'Sweet Emma Moreland, love no
more
Can touch the heart of Edward
Gray.

'Ellen Adair she loved me well,
Against her father's and mother's
will:

To-day I sat for an hour and wept.
By Ellen's grave, on the windy hill.

'Shy she was, and I thought her cold;
Thought her proud, and fled over
the sea;
Fill'd I was with folly and spite.
When Ellen Adair was dying for
me.

'Cruel, cruel the words I said!
Cruelly came they back to-day:
"You're too slight and fickle," I said,
"To trouble the heart of Edward
Gray."

'There I put my face in the grass—
Whisper'd, "Listen to my despair:
I repent me of all I did:
Speak a little, Ellen Adair!"

'Then I took a pencil, and wrote
On the mossy stone, as I lay,
"Here lies the body of Ellen Adair;
And here the heart of Edward
Gray!"

'Love may come, and love may go,
And fly, like a bird, from tree to
tree;
But I will love no more, no more,
Till Ellen Adair come back to me.

'Bitterly wept I over the stone:
Bitterly weeping I turn'd away:
There lies the body of Ellen Adair!
And there the heart of Edward
Gray!"

WILL WATERPROOF'S LYRICAL MONOLOGUE.

MADE AT THE COCK.

O PLUMP head-waiter at The Cock,
To which I most resort,
How goes the time? 'Tis five
o'clock.

Go fetch a pint of port:
But let it not be such as that
You set before chance-comers,

But such whose father-grape grew fat
On Lusitanian summers.

No vain libation to the Muse,
But may she still be kind,
And whisper lovely words, and use
Her influence on the mind,
To make me write my random
rhymes,
Ere they be half-forgotten ;
Nor add and alter, many times,
Till all be ripe and rotten.

I pledge her, and she comes and dips
Her laurel in the wine,
And lays it thrice upon my lips,
These favor'd lips of mine ;
Until the charm have power to make
New lifeblood warm the bosom,
And barren commonplaces break
In full and kindly blossom.

I pledge her silent at the board ;
Her gradual fingers steal
And touch upon the master-chord
Of all I felt and feel.
Old wishes, ghosts of broken plans
And phantom hopes assemble ;
And that child's heart within the
man's
Begins to move and tremble.

Thro' many an hour of summer suns,
By many pleasant ways,
Against its fountain upward runs
The current of my days :
I kiss the lips I once have kiss'd ;
The gas-light wavers dimmer ;
And softly, thro' a vinous mist,
My college friendships glimmer.

I grow in worth, and wit, and sense,
Unboding critic-pen,
Or that eternal want of pence,
Which vexes public men,
Who hold their hands to all, and cry
For that which all deny them—
Who sweep the crossings, wet or dry,
And all the world go by them.

Ah yet, tho' all the world forsake,
Tho' fortune clip my wings,
I will not cramp my heart, nor take

Half-views of men and things.
Let Whig and Tory stir their blood ;
There must be stormy weather ;
But for some true result of good
All parties work together.

Let there be thistles, there are grapes ;
If old things, there are new ;
Ten thousand broken lights and
shapes,
Yet glimpses of the true.
Let riffs be rife in prose and rhyme,
We lack not rhymes and reasons,
As on this whirligig of Time
We circle with the seasons.

This earth is rich in man and maid ;
With fair horizons bound :
This whole wide earth of light and
shade
Comes out a perfect round.
High over roaring Temple-bar,
And set in Heaven's third story,
I look at all things as they are,
But thro' a cloud of glory.

Head-waiter, honor'd by the guest
Half-mused, or reeling ripe,
The pint, you brought me, was the best
That ever came from pipe.
But tho' the port surpasses praise,
My nerves have dealt with stiffer.
Is there some magic in the place ?
Or do my peptics differ ?

For since I came to live and learn,
No pint of white or red
Had ever half the power to turn
This wheel within my head,
Which bears a season'd brain about,
Unsubject to confusion,
Tho' soak'd and saturate, out and out,
Thro' every convolution.

For I am of a numerous house,
With many kinsmen gay,
Where long and largely we carouse
As who shall say me nay :
Each month, a birth-day coming on,
We drink defying trouble,
Or sometimes two would meet in one,
And then we drank it double ;

Whether the vintage, yet unkept,
 Had relish fiery-new,
 Or elbow-deep in sawdust, slept,
 As old as Waterloo ;
 Or stow'd, when classic Canning died,
 In musty bins and chambers,
 Had cast upon its crusty side
 The gloom of ten Decembers.

The Muse, the jolly Muse, it is !
 She answer'd to my call,
 She changes with that mood or this,
 Is all-in-all to all :
 She lit the spark within my throat,
 To make my blood run quicker,
 Used all her fiery will, and smote
 Her life into the liquor.

And hence this halo lives about
 The waiter's hands, that reach
 To each his perfect pint of stout,
 His proper chop to each.
 He looks not like the common breed
 That with the napkin dally ;
 I think he came like Ganymede,
 From some delightful valley.

The Cock was of a larger egg
 Than modern poultry drop,
 Stept forward on a firmer leg,
 And cram'd a plumper crop ;
 Upon an ampler dunghill trod,
 Crow'd lustier late and early,
 Sipt wine from silver, praising God,
 And raked in golden barley.

A private life was all his joy,
 Till in a court he saw
 A something-pottle-bodied boy
 That knuckled at the taw :
 He stoop'd and clutch'd him, fair and
 good,
 Flew over roof and casement :
 His brothers of the weather stood
 Stock-still for sheer amazement.

But he, by farmstead, thorpe and
 spire,
 And follow'd with acclaims,
 A sign to many a staring shire
 Came crowing over Thames.
 Right down by smoky Paul's they
 bore,

Till, where the street grows straiter,
 One fix'd for ever at the door,
 And one became head-waiter.

But whither would my fancy go ?
 How out of place she makes
 The violet of a legend blow
 Among the chops and steaks !
 'Tis but a steward of the can,
 One shade more plump than com-
 mon ;
 As just and mere a serving-man
 As any born of woman.

I ranged too high : what draws me
 down
 Into the common day ?
 Is it the weight of that half-crown,
 Which I shall have to pay ?
 For, something duller than at first,
 Nor wholly comfortable,
 I sit, my empty glass reversed,
 And thrumming on the table :

Half fearful that, with self at strife,
 I take myself to task ;
 Lest of the fulness of my life
 I leave an empty flask :
 For I had hope, by something rare
 To prove myself a poet :
 But, while I plan and plan, my
 hair
 Is gray before I know it.

So fares it since the years began,
 Till they be gather'd up ;
 The truth, that flies the flowing can,
 Will haunt the vacant cup :
 And others' follies teach us not,
 Nor much their wisdom teaches ;
 And most, of sterling worth, is what
 Our own experience preaches.

Ah, let the rusty theme alone !
 We know not what we know.
 But for my pleasant hour, 'tis gone ;
 'Tis gone, and let it go.
 'Tis gone : a thousand such have
 slept
 Away from my embraces,
 And fall'n into the dusty crypt
 Of darken'd forms and faces.

Go, therefore, thou! thy betters went
Long since, and came no more;
With peals of genial clamor sent
From many a tavern-door,
With twisted quirks and happy hits.
From misty men of letters;
The tavern-hours of mighty wits—
Thine elders and thy betters.

Hours, when the Poet's words and
looks

Had yet their native glow:
Nor yet the fear of little books
Had made him talk for show;
But, all his vast heart sherris-warm'd,
He flash'd his random speeches,
Ere days, that deal in ana, swarm'd
His literary leeches.

So mix for ever with the past,
Like all good things on earth!
For should I prize thee, couldst thou
last,

At half thy real worth?
I hold it good, good things should
pass:

With time I will not quarrel:
It is but yonder empty glass
That makes me maudlin-moral.

Head-waiter of the chop-house here,
To which I most resort,
I too must part. I hold thee dear
For this good pint of port.
For this, thou shalt from all things
suck

Marrow of mirth and laughter;
And wheresoe'er thou move, good
luck
Shall fling her old shoe after.

But thou wilt never move from hence,
The sphere thy fate allots:
Thy latter days increased with pence
Go down among the pots:
Thou battenest by the greasy gleam
In haunts of hungry sinners,
Old boxes, larded with the steam
Of thirty thousand dinners.

We fret, we fume, would shift our
skins,

Would quarrel with our lot;
Thy care is, under polish'd tins,
To serve the hot-and-hot;
To come and go, and come again,
Returning like the pewit,
And watch'd by silent gentlemen,
That trifle with the cruet.

Live long, ere from thy topmost head
The thick-set hazel dies;
Long, ere the hateful crow shall tread
The corners of thine eyes:
Live long, nor feel in head or chest
Our changeful equinoxes,
Till mellow Death, like some late
guest,
Shall call thee from the boxes.

But when he calls, and thou shalt
cease

To pace the gritted floor,
And, laying down an unctuous lease
Of life, shalt earn no more;
No carved cross-bones, the types of
Death,

Shall show thee past to Heaven:
But carved cross-pipes, and, under-
neath,
A pint-pot neatly graven.

LADY CLARE.

It was the time when lilies blow,
And clouds are highest up in air,
Lord Ronald brought a lily-white doe
To give his cousin, Lady Clare.

I trow they did not part in scorn:
Lovers long-betroth'd were they:
They too will wed the morrow morn:
God's blessing on the day!

'He does not love me for my birth,
Nor for my lands so broad and fair;
He loves me for my own true worth,
And that is well,' said Lady Clare.

In there came old Alice the nurse,
Said, 'Who was this that went from
thee?'

'It was my cousin,' said Lady Clare,
'To-morrow he weds with me.'

'O God be thank'd!' said Alice the nurse,

'That all comes round so just and fair:

Lord Ronald is heir of all your lands,
And you are *not* the Lady Clare.'

'Are ye out of your mind, my nurse,
my nurse?'

Said Lady Clare, 'that ye speak so wild?'

'As God's above,' said Alice the nurse,

'I speak the truth: you are my child.

'The old Earl's daughter died at my breast;

I speak the truth, as I live by bread!
I buried her like my own sweet child,
And put my child in her stead.'

'Falsely, falsely have ye done,
O mother,' she said, 'if this be true.
To keep the best man under the sun
So many years from his due.'

'Nay now, my child,' said Alice the nurse,

'But keep the secret for your life,
And all you have will be Lord Ronald's,

When you are man and wife.

'If I'm a beggar born,' she said,
'I will speak out, for I dare not lie.
Pull off, pull off, the brooch of gold,
And fling the diamond necklace by.'

'Nay now, my child,' said Alice the nurse,

'But keep the secret all ye can.'
She said, 'Not so; but I will know
If there be any faith in man.'

'Nay now, what faith?' said Alice the nurse,

'The man will cleave unto his right.'
'And he shall have it,' the lady replied,
'Tho' I should die to-night.'

'Yet give one kiss to your mother dear!

Alas, my child, I sinn'd for thee.'

'O mother, mother, mother,' she said,
'So strange it seems to me.

'Yet here's a kiss for my mother dear,
My mother dear, if this be so,
And lay your hand upon my head,
And bless me, mother, ere I go.'

She clad herself in a russet gown,
She was no longer Lady Clare:
She went by dale, and she went by
down,
With a single rose in her hair.

The lily-white doe Lord Ronald had
brought
Leapt up from where she lay,
Dropt her head in the maiden's hand,
And follow'd her all the way.

Down stept Lord Ronald from his tower:

'O Lady Clare, you shame your worth!

Why come you drest like a village maid,
That are the flower of the earth?'

'If I come drest like a village maid,
I am but as my fortunes are:

I am a beggar born,' she said,
'And not the Lady Clare.'

'Play me no tricks,' said Lord Ronald,
'For I am yours in word and in deed.
Play me no tricks,' said Lord Ronald,
'Your riddle is hard to read.'

O and proudly stood she up!
Her heart within her did not fail:
She look'd into Lord Ronald's eyes,
And told him all her nurse's tale.

He laugh'd a laugh of merry scorn:
He turn'd and kiss'd her where she stood:

'If you are not the heiress born,
And I,' said he, 'the next in blood—

'If you are not the heiress born,
And I,' said he, 'the lawful heir,
We two will wed to-morrow morn,
And you shall still be Lady Clare.'

THE CAPTAIN.

A LEGEND OF THE NAVY.

HE that only rules by terror
Doeth grievous wrong.
Deep as Hell I count his error.
Let him hear my song.
Brave the Captain was: the seamen
Made a gallant crew,
Gallant sons of English freemen,
Sailors bold and true.
But they hated his oppression,
Stern he was and rash;
So for every light transgression
Doom'd them to the lash.
Day by day more harsh and cruel
Seem'd the Captain's mood.
Secret wrath like smother'd fuel
Burnt in each man's blood.
Yet he hoped to purchase glory,
Hoped to make the name
Of his vessel great in story,
Wheresoe'er he came.
So they past by capes and islands,
Many a harbor-mouth.
Sailing under palmy highlands
Far within the South.
On a day when they were going
O'er the lone expanse,
In the north, her canvas flowing,
Rose a ship of France.
Then the Captain's color heighten'd,
Joyful came his speech:
But a cloudy gladness lighten'd
In the eyes of each.
'Chase,' he said: the ship flew for-
ward,
And the wind did blow;
Stately, lightly, went she Norward,
Till she near'd the foe.
Then they look'd at him they hated,
Had what they desired:
Mute with folded arms they waited—
Not a gun was fired.
But they heard the foeman's thunder
Roaring out their doom;
All the air was torn in sunder;
Crashing went the boom,
Spars were splinter'd, decks were
shatter'd.
Bullets fell like rain;

Over mast and deck were scatter'd
Blood and brains of men.
Spars were splinter'd; decks were
broken:
Every mother's son—
Down they dropt—no word was
spoken—
Each beside his gun.
On the decks as they were lying,
Were their faces grim.
In their blood, as they lay dying,
Did they smile on him.
Those, in whom he had reliance
For his noble name,
With one smile of still defiance
Sold him unto shame.
Shame and wrath his heart con-
founded,
Pale he turn'd and red,
Till himself was deadly wounded
Falling on the dead.
Dismal error! fearful slaughter!
Years have wander'd by,
Side by side beneath the water
Crew and Captain lie;
There the sunlit ocean tosses
O'er them mouldering,
And the lonely seabird crosses
With one waft of the wing.

THE LORD OF BURLEIGH.

IN her ear he whispers gaily,
'If my heart by signs can tell,
Maiden, I have watch'd thee daily,
And I think thou lov'st me well.'
She replies, in accents fainter,
'There is none I love like thee.'
He is but a landscape-painter,
And a village maiden she.
He to lips, that fondly falter,
Presses his without reproof:
Leads her to the village altar,
And they leave her father's roof.
'I can make no marriage present:
Little can I give my wife.
Love will make our cottage pleasant,
And I love thee more than life.'
They by parks and lodges going
See the lordly castles stand:
Summer woods, about them blowing,

Made a murmur in the land.
 From deep thought himself he rouses,
 Says to her that loves him well,
 'Let us see these handsome houses
 Where the wealthy nobles dwell.'
 So she goes by him attended,
 Hears him lovingly converse,
 Sees whatever fair and splendid
 Lay betwixt his home and hers;
 Parks with oak and chestnut shady,
 Parks and order'd gardens great,
 Ancient homes of lord and lady,
 Built for pleasure and for state.
 All he shows her makes him dearer:
 Evermore she seems to gaze
 On that cottage growing nearer,
 Where they twain will spend their
 days.
 O but she will love him truly!
 He shall have a cheerful home;
 She will order all things duly,
 When beneath his roof they come.
 Thus her heart rejoices greatly,
 Till a gateway she discerns
 With armorial bearings stately,
 And beneath the gate she turns;
 Sees a mansion more majestic
 Than all those she saw before:
 Many a gallant gay domestic
 Bows before him at the door.
 And they speak in gentle murmur,
 When they answer to his call,
 While he treads with footstep firmer,
 Leading on from hall to hall.
 And, while now she wonders blindly,
 Nor the meaning can divine,
 Proudly turns he round and kindly,
 'All of this is mine and thine.'
 Here he lives in state and bounty,
 Lord of Burleigh, fair and free,
 Not a lord in all the county
 Is so great a lord as he.
 All at once the color flushes
 Her sweet face from brow to
 chin:
 As it were with shame she blushes,
 And her spirit changed within.
 Then her countenance all over
 Pale again as death did prove:
 But he clasp'd her like a lover,
 And he cheer'd her soul with love.
 So she strove against her weakness,
 Tho' at times her spirit sank:

Shaped her heart with woman's meek-
 ness

To all duties of her rank:
 And a gentle consort made he,
 And her gentle mind was such
 That she grew a noble lady,
 And the people loved her much.
 But a trouble weigh'd upon her,
 And perplex'd her, night and morn,
 With the burthen of an honor
 Unto which she was not born.
 Faint she grew, and ever fainter,
 And she murmur'd, 'Oh, that he
 Were once more that landscape-
 painter,

Which did win my heart from me!'
 So she droop'd and droop'd before him,
 Fading slowly from his side:
 Three fair children first she bore him,
 Then before her time she died.
 Weeping, weeping late and early,
 Walking up and pacing down,
 Deeply mourn'd the Lord of Burleigh,
 Burleigh-house by Stamford-town.
 And he came to look upon her,
 And he look'd at her and said,
 'Bring the dress and put it on her,
 That she wore when she was wed.'
 Then her people, softly treading,
 Bore to earth her body, drest
 In the dress that she was wed in,
 That her spirit might have rest.

THE VOYAGE.

I.

WE left behind the painted buoy
 That tosses at the harbor-mouth;
 And madly danced our hearts with
 joy,
 As fast we fled to the South:
 How fresh was every sight and sound
 On open main or winding shore!
 We knew the merry world was round,
 And we might sail for evermore.

II.

Warm broke the breeze against the
 brow,
 Dry sang the tackle, sang the sail:

The Lady's-head upon the prow
Caught the shrill salt, and sheer'd
the gale.
The broad seas swell'd to meet the
keel,
And swept behind; so quick the
run,
We felt the good ship shake and reel,
We seem'd to sail into the Sun!

III.

How oft we saw the Sun retire,
And burn the threshold of the
night,
Fall from his Ocean-lane of fire,
And sleep beneath his pillar'd
light!
How oft the purple-skirted robe
Of twilight slowly downward drawn,
As thro' the slumber of the globe
Again we dash'd into the dawn!

IV.

New stars all night above the brim
Of waters lighten'd into view;
They climb'd as quickly, for the rim
Changed every moment as we flew.
Far ran the naked moon across
The houseless ocean's heaving
field,
Or flying shone, the silver boss
Of her own halo's dusky shield;

V.

The peaky islet shifted shapes,
High towns on hills were dimly
seen,
We past long lines of Northern capes
And dewy Northern meadows
green.
We came to warmer waves, and deep
Across the boundless east we drove,
Where those long swells of breaker
sweep
The nutmeg rocks and isles of
clove.

VI.

By peaks that flamed, or, all in shade,
Gloom'd the low coast and quivering
brine

With ashy rains, that spreading made
Fantastic plume or sable pine;
By sands and steaming flats, and
floods
Of mighty mouth, we scudded fast,
And hills and scarlet-mingled woods
Glow'd for a moment as we past.

VII.

O hundred shores of happy climes,
How swiftly stream'd ye by the
bark!
At times the whole sea burn'd, at times
With wakes of fire we tore the
dark;
At times a carven craft would shoot
From havens hid in fairy bowers,
With naked limbs and flowers and
fruit,
But we nor paused for fruit nor
flowers.

VIII.

For one fair Vision ever fled
Down the waste waters day and
night,
And still we follow'd where she led,
In hope to gain upon her flight.
Her face was evermore unseen,
And fixt upon the far sea-line;
But each man murmur'd, 'O my
Queen,
I follow till I make thee mine.'

IX.

And now we lost her, now she
gleam'd
Like Fancy made of golden air,
Now nearer to the prow she seem'd
Like Virtue firm, like Knowledge
fair,
Now high on waves that idly burst
Like Heavenly Hope she crown'd
the sea,
And now, the bloodless point reversed,
She bore the blade of Liberty.

X.

And only one among us—him
We pleased not—he was seldom
pleased:

He saw not far: his eyes were dim:
But ours he swore were all diseased.

'A ship of fools,' he shriek'd in spite,
'A ship of fools,' he sneer'd and wept.

And overboard one stormy night
He cast his body, and on we swept.

XI.

And never sail of ours was furl'd,
Nor anchor dropt at eve or morn;
We lov'd the glories of the world,
But laws of nature were our scorn.

For blasts would rise and rave and cease,
But whence were those that drove the sail
Across the whirlwind's heart of peace,
And to and thro' the counter gale?

XII.

Again to colder climes we came,
For still we follow'd where she led:
Now mate is blind and captain lame,
And half the crew are sick or dead,
But, blind or lame or sick or sound,
We follow that which flies before:
We know the merry world is round,
And we may sail forevermore.

SIR LAUNCELOT AND QUEEN
GUINEVERE.

A FRAGMENT.

LIKE souls that balance joy and pain
With tears and smiles from heaven again

The maiden Spring upon the plain
Came in a sun-lit fall of rain.

In crystal vapor everywhere
Blue isles of heaven laugh'd between,
And far, in forest-deeps unseen,
The topmost elm-tree gather'd green
From draughts of balmy air.

Sometimes the linnet piped his song:
Sometimes the throstle whistled strong:

Sometimes the sparrowhawk, wheel'd
along,
Hush'd all the groves from fear of wrong:

By grassy capes with fuller sound
In curves the yellowing river ran,
And drooping chestnut-buds began
To spread into the perfect fan,
Above the teeming ground.

Then, in the boyhood of the year,
Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere
Rode thro' the covert of the deer,
With blissful treble ringing clear.

She seem'd a part of joyous Spring:

A gown of grass-green silk she wore,
Buckled with golden clasps before;
A light-green tuft of plumes she bore
Closed in a golden ring.

Now on some twisted ivy-net,
Now by some tinkling rivulet,
In mosses mixt with violet
Her cream-white mule his pastern set:

And fleetly now she skimm'd the plains

Than she whose elfin prancer springs
By night to eery warblings,
When all the glimmering moorland rings

With jingling bridle-reins.

As fast she fled thro' sun and shade,
The happy winds upon her play'd,
Blowing the ringlet from the braid:
She look'd so lovely, as she sway'd

The rein with dainty finger-tips,
A man had given all other bliss,
And all his worldly worth for this,
To waste his whole heart in one kiss

Upon her perfect lips.

A FAREWELL.

FLOW down, cold rivulet, to the sea,
Thy tribute wave deliver:
No more by thee my steps shall be,
For ever and for ever.

Flow, softly flow, by lawn and lea,
A rivulet then a river:
No where by thee my steps shall
be,
For ever and for ever.

But here will sigh thine alder tree,
And here thine aspen shiver;
And here by thee will hum the bee,
For ever and for ever.

A thousand suns will stream on thee,
A thousand moons will quiver;
But not by thee my steps shall be,
For ever and for ever.

THE BEGGAR MAID.

HER arms across her breast she laid;
She was more fair than words can
say:
Bare-footed came the beggar maid
Before the king Cophetua.
In robe and crown the king stepped
down,
To meet and greet her on her way;
'It is no wonder,' said the lords,
'She is more beautiful than day.'

As shines the moon in clouded skies,
She in her poor attire was seen:
One praised her ancles, one her eyes,
One her dark hair and lovesome
mien.
So sweet a face, such angel grace,
In all that land had never been:
Cophetua sware a royal oath:
'This beggar maid shall be my
queen!'

THE EAGLE.

FRAGMENT.

HE clasps the crag with crooked
hands;
Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ring'd with the azure world, he
stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;
He watches from his mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

MOVE eastward, happy earth, and
leave

Von orange sunset waning slow:
From fringes of the faded eve,
O, happy planet, eastward go;
Till over thy dark shoulder glow
Thy silver sister-world, and rise
To glass herself in dewy eyes
That watch me from the glen below.

Ah, bear me with thee, smoothly
borne,
Dip forward under starry light,
And move me to my marriage-morn,
And round again to happy night.

COME not, when I am dead,
To drop thy foolish tears upon my
grave,
To trample round my fallen head,
And vex the unhappy dust thou
wouldst not save.
There let the wind sweep and the
plover cry;
But thou, go by.

Child, if it were thine error or thy crime
I care no longer, being all unblest:
Wed whom thou wilt, but I am sick of
Time,
And I desire to rest.
Pass on, weak heart, and leave me
where I lie:
Go by, go by.

THE LETTERS.

I.

STILL on the tower stood the vane,
A black yew gloom'd the stagnant
air,
I peer'd athwart the chancel pane
And saw the altar cold and bare.
A clog of lead was round my feet,
A band of pain across my brow;

'Cold altar, Heaven and earth shall meet
Before you hear my marriage vow.'

II.

I turn'd and humm'd a bitter song
That mock'd the wholesome human heart,
And then we met in wrath and wrong,
We met, but only meant to part.
Full cold my greeting was and dry;
She faintly smiled, she hardly moved;
I saw with half-unconscious eye
She wore the colors I approved.

III.

She took the little ivory chest,
With half a sigh she turn'd the key,
Then raised her head with lips compressed,
And gave my letters back to me.
And gave the trinkets and the rings,
My gifts, when gifts of mine could please;
As looks a father on the things
Of his dead son, I look'd on these.

IV.

She told me all her friends had said;
I raged against the public liar;
She talk'd as if her love were dead,
But in my words were seeds of fire.
'No more of love; your sex is known:
I never will be twice deceived.
Henceforth I trust the man alone,
The woman cannot be believed.

V.

'Thro' slander, meanest spawn of Hell—
And women's slander is the worst,
And you, whom once I lov'd so well,
Thro' you, my life will be accurst.'
I spoke with heart, and heat and force,
I shook her breast with vague alarms—
Like torrents from a mountain source
We rush'd into each other's arms.

VI.

We parted: sweetly gleam'd the stars,
And sweet the vapor-braided blue,
Low breezes fann'd the belfry bars,
As homeward by the church I drew.
The very graves appear'd to smile,
So fresh they rose in shadow'd swells;
'Dark porch,' I said, 'and silent aisle,
There comes a sound of marriage bells.'

THE VISION OF SIN.

I.

I HAD a vision when the night was late:
A youth came riding toward a palace-gate.
He rode a horse with wings, that would have flown,
But that his heavy rider kept him down.
And from the palace came a child of sin,
And took him by the curls, and led him in,
Where sat a company with heated eyes,
Expecting when a fountain should arise:
A sleepy light upon their brows and lips—
As when the sun, a crescent of eclipse,
Dreams over lake and lawn, and isles and capes—
Suffused them, sitting, lying, languid shapes,
By heaps of gourds, and skins of wine, and piles of grapes.

II.

Then methought I heard a mellow sound,
Gathering up from all the lower ground;
Narrowing in to where they sat assembled
Low voluptuous music winding trembled,

Wov'n in circles: they that heard it
sigh'd,
Panted hand-in-hand with faces pale,
Swung themselves, and in low tones
replied;
Till the fountain spouted, showering
wide
Sleet of diamond-drift and pearly hail;
Then the music touch'd the gates and
died;
Rose again from where it seem'd to
fail,
Storm'd in orbs of song, a growing
gale;
Till thronging in and in, to where they
waited,
As 'twere a hundred-throated night-
ingale,
The strong tempestuous treble
throb'd and palpitated;
Ran into its giddiest whirl of sound,
Caught the sparkles, and in circles,
Purple gauzes, golden hazes, liquid
mazes,
Flung the torrent rainbow round:
Then they started from their places,
Moved with violence, changed in hue,
Caught each other with wild grimaces,
Half-invisible to the view,
Wheeling with precipitate paces
To the melody, till they flew,
Hair, and eyes, and limbs, and faces,
Twisted hard in fierce embraces,
Like to Furies, like to Graces,
Dash'd together in blinding dew:
Till, kill'd with some luxurious agony,
The nerve-dissolving melody
Flutter'd headlong from the sky.

III.

And then I look'd up toward a moun-
tain-tract,
That girt the region with high cliff
and lawn:
I saw that every morning, far with-
drawn
Beyond the darkness and the cataract,
God made Himself an awful rose of
dawn,
Unheeded: and detaching, fold by fold,
From those still heights, and, slowly
drawing near,

A vapor heavy, hueless, formless,
cold,
Came floating on for many a month
and year,
Unheeded: and I thought I would
have spoken,
And warn'd that madman ere it grew
too late:
But, as in dreams, I could not. Mine
was broken,
When that cold vapor touch'd the
palace gate,
And link'd again. I saw within my
head
A gray and gap-tooth'd man as lean
as death,
Who slowly rode across a wither'd
leath,
And lighted at a ruin'd inn, and said:

IV.

' Wrinkled ostler, grim and thin!
Here is custom come your way;
Take my brute, and lead him in,
Stuff his ribs with mouldy hay.

' Bitter barmaid, waning fast!
See that sheets are on my bed;
What! the flower of life is past:
It is long before you wed.

' Slip-shod waiter, lank and sour,
At the Dragon on the heath!
Let us have a quiet hour,
Let us hob-and-nob with Death.

' I am old, but let me drink;
Bring me spices, bring me wine;
I remember, when I think,
That my youth was half divine.

Wine is good for shrivell'd lips,
When a blanket wraps the day,
When the rotten woodland drips,
And the leaf is stamp'd in clay.

' Sit thee down, and have no shame,
Cheek by jowl, and knee by knee:
What care I for any name?
What for order or degree?

' Let me screw thee up a peg:
Let me loose thy tongue with wine:

Callest thou that thing a leg?
Which is thinnest? thine or mine?

'Thou shalt not be saved by works:
Thou hast been a sinner too:
Ruin'd trunks on wither'd forks,
Empty scarecrows, I and you!

'Fill the cup, and fill the can:
Have a rouse before the morn:
Every moment dies a man,
Every moment one is born.

'We are men of ruin'd blood;
Therefore comes it we are wise.
Fish are we that love the mud,
Rising to no fancy-flies.

'Name and fame! to fly sublime
Thro' the courts, the camps, the
schools,
Is to be the ball of Time,
Banded by the hands of fools.

'Friendship!—to be two in one—
Let the canting liar pack!
Well I know, when I am gone,
How she mouths behind my back.

'Virtue!—to be good and just—
Every heart, when sifted well,
Is a clot of warmer dust,
Mix'd with cunning sparks of hell.

'O! we two as well can look
Whited thought and cleanly life
As the priest, above his book
Leering at his neighbor's wife.

'Fill the cup, and fill the can:
Have a rouse before the morn:
Every moment dies a man,
Every moment one is born.

'Drink, and let the parties rave:
They are fill'd with idle spleen;
Rising, falling, like a wave,
For they know not what they mean.

'He that roars for liberty
Faster binds a tyrant's power;
And the tyrant's cruel glee
Forces on the freer hour.

'Fill the can, and fill the cup:
All the windy ways of men
Are but dust that rises up,
And is lightly laid again.

'Greet her with applausive breath,
Freedom, gaily doth she tread;
In her right a civic wreath,
In her left a human head.

'No, I love not what is new;
She is of an ancient house:
And I think we know the hue
Of that cap upon her brows.

'Let her go! her thirst she slakes
Where the bloody conduit runs,
Then her sweetest meal she makes
On the first-born of her sons.

'Drink to lofty hopes that cool—
Visions of a perfect State:
Drink we, last, the public fool,
Frantic love and frantic hate.

'Chant me now some wicked stave,
Till thy drooping courage rise,
And the glow-worm of the grave
Glimmer in thy rheumy eyes.

'Fear not thou to loose thy tongue;
Set thy hoary fancies free;
What is loathsome to the young
Savors well to thee and me.

'Change, reverting to the years,
When thy nerves could under-
stand
What there is in loving tears,
And the warmth of hand in hand.

'Tell me tales of thy first love—
April hopes, the fools of chance;
Till the graves begin to move,
And the dead begin to dance.

'Fill the can, and fill the cup:
All the windy ways of men
Are but dust that rises up,
And is lightly laid again.

'Trooping from their mouldy dens
The chap-fallen circle spreads:

Welcome, fellow-citizens, *
Hollow hearts and empty heads!

'You are bones, and what of that?
Every face, however full,
Padded round with flesh and fat,
Is but modell'd on a skull.

'Death is king, and Vivat Rex!
Tread a measure on the stones,
Madam—if I know your sex,
From the fashion of your bones.

'No, I cannot praise the fire
In your eye—nor yet your lip:
All the more do I admire
Joints of cunning workmanship.

'Lo! God's likeness—the ground-
plan—
Neither modell'd, glazed, nor
framed:
Buss me, thou rough sketch of man,
Far too naked to be shamed!

'Drink to Fortune, drink to Chance,
While we keep a little breath!
Drink to heavy ignorance!
Hob-and-nob with brother Death!

'Thou art mazed, the night is long,
And the longer night is near:
What! I am not all as wrong
As a bitter jest is dear.

'Youthful hopes, by scores, to all,
When the locks are crisp and
curl'd;
Unto me my maudlin gall
And my mockeries of the world.

'Fill the cup, and fill the can:
Mingle madness, mingle scorn!
Dregs of life, and lees of man:
Yet we will not die forlorn.'

V.

The voice grew faint: there came a
further change:
Once more uprose the mystic moun-
tain-range:
Below were men and horses pierced
with worms,

And slowly quickening into lower
forms;
By shards and scurf of salt, and scum
of dross,
Old splash of rains, and refuse patch'd
with moss.
Then some one spake: 'Behold! it
was a crime
Of sense avenged by sense that wore
with time.'
Another said: 'The crime of sense
became
The crime of malice, and is equal
blame.'
And one: 'He had not wholly
quench'd his power;
A little grain of conscience made him
sour.'
At last I heard a voice upon the
slope
Cry to the summit, 'Is there any
hope?'
To which an answer peal'd from that
high land,
But in a tongue no man could under-
stand;
And on the glimmering limit far with-
drawn
God made Himself an awful rose of
dawn.

TO —,

AFTER READING A LIFE AND LET-
TERS.

'Cursed be he that moves my bones,'
Shakespeare's Epitaph.

You might have won the Poet's name,
If such be worth the winning now,
And gain'd a laurel for your brow
Of sounder leaf than I can claim;

But you have made the wiser choice,
A life that moves to gracious ends
Thro' troops of unrecording friends,
A deedful life, a silent voice:

And you have miss'd the irreverent
doom

Of those that wear the Poet's
crown:
Hereafter, neither knave nor clown
Shall hold their orgies at your tomb.

For now the Poet cannot die,
Nor leave his music as of old,
But round him ere he scarce be cold
Begins the scandal and the cry:

'Proclaim the faults he would not
show:
Break lock and seal: betray the
trust:
Keep nothing sacred: 'tis but just
The many-headed beast should know.'

Ah shameless! for he did but sing
A song that pleased us from its
worth;
No public life was his on earth,
No blazon'd statesman he, nor king.

He gave the people of his best:
His worst he kept, his best he gave.
My Shakespeare's curse on clown
and knave
Who will not let his ashes rest!

Who make it seem more sweet to be
The little life of bank and brier,
The bird that pipes his lone desire
And dies unheard within his tree,

Than he that warbles long and loud
And drops at Glory's temple-gates,
For whom the carrion vulture waits
To tear his heart before the crowd!

TO E. L., ON HIS TRAVELS IN
GREECE.

ILLYRIAN woodlands, echoing falls
Of water, sheets of summer glass,
The long divine Peneian pass,
The vast Akroeraunian walls,

Tomohrit, Athos, all things fair,
With such a pencil, such a pen,
You shadow forth to distant men,
I read and felt that I was there:

And trust me while I turn'd the page,
And track'd you still on classic
ground,
I grew in gladness till I found
My spirits in the golden age.

For me the torrent ever pour'd
And glisten'd—here and there alone
The broad-limb'd Gods at random
thrown

By fountain-urns;—and Naiads oar'd

A glimmering shoulder under gloom
Of cavern pillars; on the swell
The silver lily heaved and fell;
And many a slope was rich in bloom

From him that on the mountain lea
By dancing rivulets fed his flocks
To him who sat upon the rocks,
And fluted to the morning sea.

BREAK, break, break,
On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!
And I would that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy,
That he shouts with his sister at
play!
O well for the sailor lad,
That he sings in his boat on the bay!

And the stately ships go on
To their haven under the hill;
But O for the touch of a vanish'd hand,
And the sound of a voice that is
still!

Break, break, break,
At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!
But the tender grace of a day that is
dead
Will never come back to me.

THE POET'S SONG.

The rain had fallen, the Poet arose,
He pass'd by the town and out of
the street,

A light wind blew from the gates of
the sun,
And waves of shadow went over
the wheat,
And he sat him down in a lonely
place,
And chanted a melody loud and
sweet,
That made the wild-swan pause in her
cloud,
And the lark drop down at his
feet.

The swallow stopt as he hunted the
fly,
The snake slipt under a spray,
The wild hawk stood with the down
on his beak,
And stared, with his foot on the
prey,
And the nightingale thought, 'I have
sung many songs,
But never a one so gay,
For he sings of what the world will be
When the years have died away.'

ENOCH ARDEN

AND OTHER POEMS.

ENOCH ARDEN.

LONG lines of cliff breaking have left
a chasm;
And in the chasm are foam and yel-
low sands;
Beyond, red roofs about a narrow
wharf
In cluster; then a moulder'd church;
and higher
A long street climbs to one tall-
tower'd mill;
And high in heaven behind it a gray
down
With Danish barrows; and a hazel-
wood,
By autumn nutters haunted, flourishes
Green in a cuplike hollow of the
down.

Here on this beach a hundred years
ago,
Three children of three houses, Annie
Lec,
The prettiest little damsel in the port,
And Philip Ray the miller's only son,
And Enoch Arden, a rough sailor's lad
Made orphan by a winter shipwreck,
play'd
Among the waste and lumber of the
shore,
Hard coils of cordage, swarthy fish-
ing-nets,

Anchors of rusty fluke, and boats up-
drawn;
And built their castles of dissolving
sand
To watch them overflow'd, or follow-
ing up
And flying the white breaker, daily
left
The little footprint daily wash'd away.

A narrow cave ran in beneath the
cliff:
In this the children play'd at keeping
house.
Enoch was host one day, Philip the
next,
While Annie still was mistress; but
at times
Enoch would hold possession for a
week:
'This is my house and this my little
wife.'
'Mine too' said Philip 'turn and turn
about:'
When, if they quarrell'd, Enoch
stronger-made
Was master: then would Philip, his
blue eyes
All flooded with the helpless wrath of
tears,
Shriek out 'I hate you, Enoch,' and
at this
The little wife would weep for com-
pany,

And pray them not to quarrel for her
sake,
And say she would be little wife to
both.

But when the dawn of rosy child-
hood past,
And the new warmth of life's ascend-
ing sun
Was felt by either, either fixt his
heart
On that one girl; and Enoch spoke
his love,
But Philip loved in silence; and the
girl
Seem'd kinder unto Philip than to
him;
But she loved Enoch; tho' she knew
it not,
And would if ask'd deny it. Enoch
set
A purpose evermore before his eyes,
To hoard all savings to the utter-
most,
To purchase his own boat, and make
a home
For Annie: and so prosper'd that at
last
A luckier or a bolder fisherman,
A carefuller in peril, did not breathe
For leagues along that breaker-beaten
coast
Than Enoch. Likewise had he
served a year
On board a merchantman, and made
himself
Full sailor; and he thrice had pluck'd
a life
From the dread sweep of the
down-streaming seas:
And all men look'd upon him favora-
bly:
And ere he touch'd his one-and-
twentieth May
He purchased his own boat, and
made a home
For Annie, neat and nestlike, halfway
up
The narrow street that clamber'd
toward the mill.

Then, on a golden autumn eventide,
The younger people making holiday,

With bag and sack and basket, great
and small,
Went nutting to the hazels. Philip
stay'd
(His father lying sick and needing
him)
An hour behind; but as he climb'd
the hill,
Just where the prone edge of the
wood began
To feather toward the hollow, saw the
pair,
Enoch and Annie, sitting hand-in-
hand,
His large gray eyes and weather-
beaten face
All-kindled by a still and sacred fire,
That burn'd as on an altar. Philip
look'd,
And in their eyes and faces read his
doom;
Then, as their faces drew together,
groan'd,
And slept aside, and like a wounded
life
Crept down into the hollows of the
wood;
There, while the rest were loud in
merry-making,
Had his dark hour unseen, and rose
and past
Bearing a lifelong hunger in his
heart.

So these were wed, and merrily
rang the bells,
And merrily ran the years, seven
happy years,
Seven happy years of health and com-
petence,
And mutual love and honorable toil;
With children; first a daughter. In
him woke,
With his first babe's first cry, the
noble wish
To save all earnings to the uttermost,
And give his child a better bringing-
up
Than his had been, or hers; a wish
renew'd,
When two years after came a boy to
be
The rosy idol of her solitudes,



"ARE THERE NO BEGGARS AT YOUR GATE?"—*Page 25.*



While Enoch was abroad on wrathful
seas,
Or often journeying landward; for in
truth
Enoch's white horse, and Enoch's
ocean-spoil
In ocean-smelling osier, and his face,
Rough-redden'd with a thousand winter
gales,
Not only to the market-cross were
known,
But in the leafy lanes behind the down,
Far as the portal-warding lion-whelp,
And peacock-yewtree of the lonely
Hall,
Whose Friday fare was Enoch's min-
istering.

Then came a change, as all things
human change.
Ten miles to northward of the narrow
port
Open'd a larger haven: thither used
Enoch at times to go by land or sea;
And once when there, and clambering
on a mast
In harbor, by mischance he slipt and
fell:
A limb was broken when they lifted
him;
And while he lay recovering there,
his wife
Bore him another son, a sickly one:
Another hand crept too across his
trade
Taking her bread and theirs: and on
him fell,
Altho' a grave and staid God-fearing
man,
Yet lying thus inactive, doubt and
gloom.
He seem'd, as in a nightmare of the
night,
To see his children leading evermore
Low miserable lives of hand-to-mouth,
And her, he loved, a beggar: then he
pray'd
'Save them from this, whatever comes
to me.'
And while he pray'd, the master of
that ship
Enoch had served in, hearing his mis-
chance,

Came, for he knew the man and
valued him,
Reporting of his vessel China-bound,
And wanting yet a boatswain.
Would he go?
There yet were many weeks before
she sail'd,
Sail'd from this port. Would Enoch
have the place?
And Enoch all at once assented to it,
Rejoicing at that answer to his prayer.

So now that shadow of mischance
appear'd
No graver than as when some little
cloud
Cuts off the fiery highway of the sun,
And isles a light in the offing: yet
the wife—
When he was gone—the children—
what to do?
Then Enoch lay long-pondering on
his plans;
To sell the boat—and yet he loved
her well—
How many a rough sea had he
weather'd in her!
He knew her, as a horseman knows
his horse—
And yet to sell her—then with what
she brought
Buy goods and stores—set Annie
forth in trade
With all that seamen needed or their
wives—
So might she keep the house while he
was gone.
Should he not trade himself out
yonder? go
This voyage more than once? yea
twice or thrice—
As oft as needed—last, returning rich,
Become the master of a larger craft,
With fuller profits lead an easier life,
Have all his pretty young ones edu-
cated,
And pass his days in peace among his
own.

Thus Enoch in his heart determined
all:
Then moving homeward came on
Annie pale,

Nursing the sickly babe, her latest-born.

Forward she started with a happy cry,
And laid the feeble infant in his arms;
Whom Enoch took, and handled all
his limbs,

Appraised his weight and fondled
father-like,

But had no heart to break his purposes
To Annie, till the morrow, when he
spoke.

Then first since Enoch's golden
ring had girt
Her finger, Annie fought against his
will:

Yet not with brawling opposition she,
But manifold entreaties, many a tear,
Many a sad kiss by day by night re-
new'd

(Sure that all evil would come out of
it)

Besought him, supplicating, if he cared
For her or his dear children, not to
go.

He not for his own self caring but her,
Her and her children, let her plead in
vain;

So grieving held his will, and bore it
thro'.

For Enoch parted with his old sea-
friend,
Bought Annie goods and stores, and
set his hand

To fit their little streetward sitting-
room

With shelf and corner for the goods
and stores.

So all day long till Enoch's last at
home,

Shaking their pretty cabin, hammer
and axe,

Auger and saw, while Annie seem'd
to hear

Her own death-scaffold raising, shrill'd
and rang,

Till this was ended, and his careful
hand,—

The space was narrow,—having or-
der'd all

Almost as neat and close as Nature
packs

Her blossom or her seedling, paused;
and he,
Who needs would work for Annie to
the last,
Ascending tired, heavily slept till
morn.

And Enoch faced this morning of
farewell

Brightly and boldly. All his Annie's
fears,

Save, as his Annie's, were a laughter
to him.

Yet Enoch as a brave God-fearing
man

Bow'd himself down, and in that mys-
tery

Where God-in-man is one with man-
in-God,

Pray'd for a blessing on his wife and
babes

Whatever came to him: and then he
said

'Annie, this voyage by the grace of
God

Will bring fair weather yet to all of us.
Keep a clean hearth and a clear fire

for me,
For I'll be back, my girl, before you
know it.'

Then lightly rocking baby's cradle
'and he,

This pretty, puny, weakly little one,—
Nay—for I love him all the better for
it—

God bless him, he shall sit upon my
knees

And I will tell him tales of foreign
parts,

And make him merry, when I come
home again.

Come, Annie, come, cheer up before
I go.'

Him running on thus hopefully she
heard,

And almost hoped herself; but when
he turn'd

The current of his talk to graver
things

In sailor fashion roughly sermonizing
On providence and trust in Heaven,

she heard,

Heard and not heard him; as the vil-
lage girl,
Who sets her pitcher underneath the
spring,
Musing on him that used to fill it for
her,
Hears and not hears, and lets it over-
flow.

At length she spoke 'O Enoch, you
are wise;
And yet for all your wisdom well know
I
That I shall look upon your face no
more.'

'Well then,' said Enoch, 'I shall
look on yours.
Annie, the ship I sail in passes here
(He named the day) get you a sea-
man's glass,
Spy out my face, and laugh at all your
fears.'

But when the last of those last mo-
ments came,
'Annie, my girl, cheer up, be com-
forted,
Look to the babes, and till I come
again
Keep everything shipshape, for I must
go.
And fear no more for me; or if you
fear
Cast all your cares on God; that an-
chor holds.
Is He not yonder in those uttermost
Parts of the morning? if I flee to
these
Can I go from Him? and the sea is
His,
The sea is His: He made it.'

Enoch rose,
Cast his strong arms about his droop-
ing wife,
And kiss'd his wonder-stricken little
ones;
But for the third, the sickly one, who
slept
After a night of feverous wakefulness,
When Annie would have raised him
Enoch said

'Wake him not; let him sleep; how
should the child
Remember this?' and kiss'd him in
his cot.
But Annie from her baby's forehead
clipt
A tiny curl, and gave it: this he
kept
Thro' all his future; but now hastily
caught
His bundle, waved his hand, and went
his way.

She when the day, that Enoch men-
tion'd, came,
Borrow'd a glass, but all in vain: per-
haps
She could not fix the glass to suit her
eye;
Perhaps her eye was dim, hand tremu-
lous;
She saw him not: and while he stood
on deck
Waving, the moment and the vessel
past.

Ev'n to the last dip of the vanish-
ing sail
She watch'd it, and departed weeping
for him;
Then, tho' she mourn'd his absence as
his grave,
Set her sad will no less to chime with
his,
But throve not in her trade, not being
bred
To barter, nor compensating the
want
By shrewdness, neither capable of
lies,
Nor asking overmuch and taking less,
And still foreboding 'what would
Enoch say?'
For more than once, in days of diffi-
culty
And pressure, had she sold her wares
for less
Than what she gave in buying what
she sold:
She fail'd and sadden'd knowing it;
and thus,
Expectant of that news which never
came,

Gain'd for her own a scanty suste-
 nance,
 And lived a life of silent melancholy.

Now the third child was sickly-born
 and grew
 Yet sicklier, tho' the mother cared for
 it
 With all a mother's care: neverthe-
 less,
 Whether her business often call'd her
 from it,
 Or thro' the want of what it needed
 most,
 Or means to pay the voice who best
 could tell
 What most it needed—howsoever it
 was,
 After a lingering,—ere she was
 aware,—
 Like the caged bird escaping sud-
 denly,
 The little innocent soul flitted away.

In that same week when Annie
 buried it,
 Philip's true heart, which hunger'd
 for her peace
 (Since Enoch left he had not look'd
 upon her),
 Smote him, as having kept aloof so
 long.
 'Surely,' said Philip, 'I may see her
 now,
 May be some little comfort;' there-
 fore went,
 Past thro' the solitary room in front,
 Paused for a moment at an inner door,
 Then struck it thrice, and, no one
 opening,
 Enter'd; but Annie, seated with her
 grief,
 Fresh from the burial of her little
 one,
 Cared not to look on any human face.
 But turn'd her own toward the wall
 and wept.
 Then Philip standing up said falter-
 ingly
 'Annie, I came to ask a favor of you.'

He spoke; the passion in her
 moan'd reply

'Favor from one so sad and so for-
 lorn
 As I am!' half abash'd him; yet un-
 ask'd,
 His bashfulness and tenderness at
 war,
 He set himself beside her, saying to
 her:

'I came to speak to you of what he
 wish'd,
 Enoch, your husband: I have ever
 said
 You chose the best among us—a
 strong man:
 For where he fixt his heart he set his
 hand
 To do the thing he will'd, and bore it
 thro'.
 And wherefore did he go this weary
 way,
 And leave you lonely? not to see the
 world—
 For pleasure?—nay, but for the
 wherewithal
 To give his babes a better bringing-up
 Than his had been, or yours: that was
 his wish.
 And if he come again, vext will he be
 To find the precious morning hours
 were lost.
 And it would vex him even in his
 grave,
 If he could know his babes were run-
 ning wild
 Like colts about the waste. So, An-
 nie, now—
 Have we not known each other all
 our lives?
 I do beseech you by the love you bear
 Him and his children not to say me
 nay—
 For, if you will, when Enoch comes
 again
 Why then he shall repay me—if you
 will,
 Annie—for I am rich and well-to-do.
 Now let me put the boy and girl to
 school:
 This is the favor that I came to ask.'

Then Annie with her brows against
 the wall

Answer'd 'I cannot look you in the face;
I seem so foolish and so broken down.
When you came in my sorrow broke me down;
And now I think your kindness breaks me down;
But Enoch lives; that is borne in on me;
He will repay you: money can be repaid;
Not kindness such as yours.'

And Philip ask'd
'Then you will let me, Annie?'

There she turn'd,
She rose, and fixt her swimming eyes upon him,
And dwelt a moment on his kindly face,
Then calling down a blessing on his head
Caught at his hand, and wrung it passionately,
And past into the little garth beyond.
So lifted up in spirit he moved away.

Then Philip put the boy and girl to school,
And bought them needful books, and every way,
Like one who does his duty by his own,
Made himself theirs; and tho' for Annie's sake,
Fearing the lazy gossip of the port,
He oft denied his heart his dearest wish,
And seldom crost her threshold, yet he sent
Gifts by the children, garden-herbs and fruit,
The late and early roses from his wall,
Or conies from the down, and now and then,
With some pretext of fineness in the meal
To save the offence of charitable flour

From his tall mill that whistled on the waste.

But Philip did not fathom Annie's mind:
Scarce could the woman when he came upon her,
Out of full heart and boundless gratitude
Light on a broken word to thank him with.
But Philip was her children's all-in-all;
From distant corners of the street they ran
To greet his hearty welcome heartily;
Lords of his house and of his mill were they;
Worried his passive ear with petty wrongs
Or pleasures, hung upon him, play'd with him
And call'd him Father Philip. Philip gain'd
As Enoch lost; for Enoch seem'd to them

Uncertain as a vision or a dream,
Faint as a figure seen in early dawn
Down at the far end of an avenue,
Going we know not where: and so ten years,
Since Enoch left his hearth and native land,
Fled forward and no news of Enoch came.

It chanced one evening Annie's children long'd
To go with others, nutting to the wood,
And Annie would go with them; then they begg'd
For Father Philip (as they call'd him) too:
Him, like the working bee in blossom-dust,
Blanch'd with his mill, they found; and saying to him
'Come with us Father Philip' he denied;
But when the children pluck'd at him to go,

He laugh'd, and yielded readily to
their wish,
For was not Annie with them? and
they went.

But after scaling half the weary
down,
Just where the prone edge of the wood
began
To feather toward the hollow, all her
force
Fail'd her; and sighing, 'Let me rest'
she said:
So Philip rested with her well-con-
tent;
While all the younger ones with jubi-
lant cries
Broke from their elders, and tumultu-
ously
Down thro' the whitening hazels made
a plunge
To the bottom, and dispersed, and
bent or broke
The lithe reluctant boughs to tear
away
Their tawny clusters, crying to each
other
And calling, here and there, about the
wood.

But Philip sitting at her side forgot
Her presence, and remember'd one
dark hour
Here in this wood, when like a
wounded life
He crept into the shadow: at last he
said,
Lifting his honest forehead, 'Listen,
Annie,
How merry they are down yonder in
the wood.
Tired, Annie?' for she did not speak
a word.
'Tired?' but her face had fall'n upon
her hands;
At which, as with a kind of anger in
him,
'The ship was lost,' he said, 'the ship
was lost!
No more of that! why should you kill
yourself
And make them orphans quite?'
And Annie said

'I thought not of it: but—I know
not why—
Their voices make me feel so solitary.'

Then Philip coming somewhat
closer spoke.
'Annie, there is a thing upon my
mind,
And it has been upon my mind so
long,
That tho' I know not when it first
came there,
I know that it will out at last. O
Annie,
It is beyond all hope, against all
chance,
That he who left you ten long years
ago
Should still be living; well then—let
me speak:
I grieve to see you poor and wanting
help:
I cannot help you as I wish to do
Unless—they say that women are so
quick—
Perhaps you know what I would have
you know—
I wish you for my wife. I fain would
prove
A father to your children: I do think
They love me as a father: I am sure
That I love them as if they were mine
own;
And I believe, if you were fast my
wife,
That after all these sad uncertain
years,
We might be still as happy as God
grants
To any of his creatures. Think upon
it:
For I am well-to-do—no kin, no care,
No burthen, save my care for you and
yours:
And we have known each other all
our lives,
And I have loved you longer than you
know.'

Then answer'd Annie; tenderly she
spoke:
'You have been as God's good angel
in our house.'

God bless you for it, God reward you
for it,
Philip, with something happier than
myself.
Can one love twice? can you be ever
loved
As Enoch was? what is it that you
ask?'
'I am content' he answer'd 'to be
loved
A little after Enoch.' 'O' she cried,
Scared as it were, 'dear Philip, wait a
while:
If Enoch comes—but Enoch will not
come—
Yet wait a year, a year is not so
long:
Surely I shall be wiser in a year:
O wait a little!' Philip sadly said
'Annie, as I have waited all my life
I well may wait a little.' 'Nay' she
cried
'I am bound: you have my promise—
in a year
Will you not bide your year as I bide
mine?'
And Philip answer'd 'I will bide my
year.'

Here both were mute, till Philip
glancing up
Beheld the dead flame of the fallen
day
Pass from the Danish barrow over-
head;
Then fearing night and chill for
Annie, rose
And sent his voice beneath him thro'
the wood.
Up came the children laden with their
spoil;
Then all descended to the port, and
there
At Annie's door he paused and gave
his hand,
Saying gently 'Annie, when I spoke
to you,
That was your hour of weakness. I
was wrong.
I am always bound to you, but you
are free.'
Then Annie weeping answer'd 'I am
bound.'

She spoke; and in one moment as
it were,
While yet she went about her house-
hold ways,
Ev'n as she dwelt upon his latest
words,
That he had loved her longer than
she knew,
That autumn into autumn flash'd
again,
And there he stood once more before
her face,
Claiming her promise. 'Is it a year?'
she ask'd.
'Yes, if the nuts' he said 'be ripe
again:
Come out and see.' But she—she
put him off—
So much to look to—such a change—
a month—
Give her a month—she knew that she
was bound—
A month—no more. Then Philip
with his eyes
Full of that lifelong hunger, and his
voice
Shaking a little like a drunkard's
hand,
'Take your own time, Annie, take
your own time.'
And Annie could have wept for pity
of him;
And yet she held him on delayingly
With many a scarce-believable ex-
cuse,
Trying his truth and his long-suffer-
ance,
Till half-another year had slipt away.

By this the lazy gossips of the port,
Abhorrent of a calculation crost,
Began to chafe as at a personal wrong.
Some thought that Philip did but
trifle with her;
Some that she but held off to draw
him on;
And others laugh'd at her and Philip
too,
As simple folk that knew not their
own minds,
And one, in whom all evil fancies
clung
Like serpent eggs together, laughingly

Would hint at worse in either. Her
 own son
 Was silent, tho' he often look'd his
 wish;
 But evermore the daughter prest upon
 her
 To wed the man so dear to all of them
 And lift the household out of pov-
 erty;
 And Philip's rosy face contracting
 grew
 Careworn and wan; and all these
 things fell on her
 Sharp as reproach.

At last one night it chanced
 That Annie could not sleep, but
 earnestly
 Pray'd for a sign 'my Enoch is he
 gone?'
 Then compass'd round by the blind
 wall of night
 Brook'd not the expectant terror of
 her heart,
 Started from bed, and struck herself
 a light,
 Then desperately seized the holy
 Book,
 Suddenly set it wide to find a sign,
 Suddenly put her finger on the text,
 'Under the palm-tree.' That was
 nothing to her:
 No meaning there: she closed the
 Book and slept:
 When lo! her Enoch sitting on a
 height,
 Under a palm-tree, over him the Sun:
 'He is gone,' she thought, 'he is
 happy, he is singing
 Hosanna in the highest: yonder
 shines
 The Sun of Righteousness, and these
 be palms
 Whereof the happy people strowing
 cried
 "Hosanna in the highest!"' Here
 she woke,
 Resolved, sent for him and said wildly
 to him
 'There is no reason why we should
 not wed.'
 'Then for God's sake,' he answer'd,
 'both our sakes,

So you will wed me, let it be at once.'

So these were wed and merrily rang
 the bells,
 Merrily rang the bells and they were
 wed.
 But never merrily beat Annie's heart.
 A footstep seem'd to fall beside her
 path,
 She knew not whence; a whisper on
 her ear,
 She knew not what; nor loved she to
 be left
 Alone at home, nor ventured out alone.
 What ail'd her then, that ere she en-
 ter'd, often
 Her hand dwelt lingeringly on the
 latch,
 Fearing to enter: Philip thought he
 knew:
 Such doubts and fears were common
 to her state,
 Being with child: but when her child
 was born,
 Then her new child was as herself
 renew'd,
 Then the new mother came about her
 heart,
 Then her good Philip was her all-in-
 all,
 And that mysterious instinct wholly
 died.

And where was Enoch? prosper-
 ously sail'd
 The ship 'Good Fortune,' tho' at set-
 ting forth
 The Biscay, roughly ridging eastward,
 shook
 And almost overwhelm'd her, yet un-
 vex'd
 She slipt across the summer of the
 world,
 Then after a long tumble about the
 Cape
 And frequent interchange of foul and
 fair,
 She passing thro' the summer world
 again,
 The breath of heaven came continu-
 ally
 And sent her sweetly by the golden
 isles,

Till silent in her oriental haven.

There Enoch traded for himself,
and bought
Quaint monsters for the market of
those times,
A gilded dragon, also, for the babes.

Less lucky her home-voyage: at
first indeed
Thro' many a fair sea-circle, day by
day,
Scarce-rocking, her full-busted figure-
head
Stared o'er the ripple feathering from
her bows:
Then follow'd calms, and then winds
variable,
Then baffling, a long course of them;
and last
Storm, such as drove her under moon-
less heavens
Till hard upon the cry of 'breakers'
came
The crash of ruin, and the loss of
all
But Enoch and two others. Half the
night,
Buoy'd upon floating tackle and
broken spars,
These drifted, stranding on an isle at
morn
Rich, but the loneliest in a lonely sea.

No want was there of human suste-
nance,
Soft fruitage, mighty nuts, and nour-
ishing roots;
Nor save for pity was it hard to take
The helpless life so wild that it was
tame.
There in a seaward-gazing mountain-
gorge
They built, and thatch'd with leaves
of palm, a hut,
Half hut, half native cavern. So the
three,
Set in this Eden of all plenteousness,
Dwelt with eternal summer, ill-con-
tent.

For one, the youngest, hardly more
than boy,

Hurt in that night of sudden ruin and
wreck,
Lay lingering out a five-years' death-
in-life.
They could not leave him. After he
was gone,
The two remaining found a fallen
stem;
And Enoch's comrade, careless of
himself,
Fire-hollowing this in Indian fashion,
fell
Sun-stricken, and that other lived
alone.
In those two deaths he read God's
warning 'wait.'

The mountain wooded to the peak,
the lawns
And winding glades high up like ways
to Heaven,
The slender coco's drooping crown of
plumes,
The lightning flash of insect and of
bird,
The lustre of the long convolvuluses
That coil'd around the stately stems,
and ran
Ev'n to the limit of the land, the glows
And glories of the broad belt of the
world,
All these he saw; but what he fain
had seen
He could not see, the kindly human
face,
Nor ever hear a kindly voice, but
heard
The myriad shriek of wheeling ocean-
fowl,
The league-long roller thundering on
the reef,
The moving whisper of huge trees
that branch'd
And blossom'd in the zenith, or the
sweep
Of some precipitous rivulet to the
wave,
As down the shore he ranged, or all
day long
Sat often in the seaward-gazing gorge,
A shipwreck'd sailor, waiting for a
sail:
No sail from day to day, but every day

The sunrise broken into scarlet shafts
Among the palms and ferns and precipices ;

The blaze upon the waters to the east ;

The blaze upon his island overhead ;
The blaze upon the waters to the west ;

Then the great stars that globed themselves in Heaven,

The hollow-bellowing ocean, and again

The scarlet shafts of sunrise—but no sail.

There often as he watch'd or seem'd to watch,
So still, the golden lizard on him paused,

A phantom made of many phantoms moved

Before him haunting him, or he himself

Moved haunting people, things and places, known

Far in a darker isle beyond the line ;

The babes, their babble, Annie, the small house,

The climbing street, the mill, the leafy lanes,

The peacock-yewtree and the lonely Hall,

The horse he drove, the boat he sold, the chill

November dawns and dewy-glooming downs,

The gentle shower, the smell of dying leaves,

And the low moan of leaden-color'd seas.

Once likewise, in the ringing of his ears,

Tho' faintly, merrily—far and far away—

He heard the pealing of his parish bells ;

Then, tho' he knew not wherefore, started up

Shuddering, and when the beautiful hateful isle

Return'd upon him, had not his poor heart

Spoken with That, which being everywhere

Lets none, who speaks with Him, seem all alone,

Surely the man had died of solitude.

Thus over Enoch's early-silvering head

The sunny and rainy seasons came and went

Year after year. His hopes to see his own,

And pace the sacred old familiar fields,

Not yet had perish'd, when his lonely doom

Came suddenly to an end. Another ship

(She wanted water) blown by baffling winds,

Like the Good Fortune, from her destined course,

Stay'd by this isle, not knowing where she lay :

For since the mate had seen at early dawn

Across a break on the mist-wreathen isle

The silent water slipping from the hills,

They sent a crew that landing burst away

In search of stream or fount, and fill'd the shores

With clamor. Downward from his mountain gorge

Stept the long-hair'd long-bearded solitary,

Brown, looking hardly human, strangely clad,

Muttering and mumbling, idiotlike it seem'd,

With inarticulate rage, and making signs

They knew not what : and yet he led the way

To where the rivulets of sweet water ran ;

And ever as he mingled with the crew, And heard them talking, his long-bounden tongue

Was loosen'd, till he made them understand ;

Whom, when their casks were fill'd
they took aboard :
And there the tale he utter'd brokenly.
Scarce-credited at first but more and
more,
Amazed and melted all who listen'd to
it :
And clothes they gave him and free
passage home ;
But oft he work'd among the rest and
shook
His isolation from him. None of
these
Came from his country, or could
answer him,
If question'd, aught of what he cared
to know.
And dull the voyage was with long
delays,
The vessel scarce sea-worthy ; but
evermore
His fancy fled before the lazy wind
Returning, till beneath a clouded
moon
He like a lover down thro' all his
blood
Drew in the dewy meadowy morning-
breath
Of England, blown across her ghostly
wall :
And that same morning officers and
men
Levied a kindly tax upon them-
selves,
Pitying the lonely man, and gave him
it :
Then moving up the coast they landed
him,
Ev'n in that harbor whence he sail'd
before.

There Enoch spoke no word to any
one,
But homeward—home—what home ?
had he a home ?
His home, he walk'd. Bright was
that afternoon,
Sunny but chill ; till drawn thro'
either chasm,
Where either haven open'd on the
deep's,
Roll'd a sea-haze and whelm'd the
world in gray ;

Cut off the length of highway on
before,
And left but narrow breadth to left
and right
Of wither'd holt or tilth or pastur-
age.
On the nigh-naked tree the robin
pip'd
Disconsolate, and thro' the dripping
haze
The dead weight of the dead leaf bore
it down :
Thicker the drizzle grew, deeper the
gloom ;
Last, as it seem'd, a great mist-blotted
light
Flared on him, and he came upon the
place.

Then down the long street having
slowly stolen,
His heart foreshadowing all calam-
ity,
His eyes upon the stones, he reach'd
the home
Where Annie lived and loved him, and
his babes
In those far-off seven happy years
were born ;
But finding neither light nor murmur
there
(A bill of sale gleam'd thro' the
drizzle) crept
Still downward thinking ' dead or dead
to me ! '

Down to the pool and narrow wharf
he went,
Seeking a tavern which of old he
knew,
A front of timber-crost antiquity,
So propt, worm-eaten, ruinously old,
He thought it must have gone ; but he
was gone
Who kept it ; and his widow Miriam
Lane,
With daily-dwindling profits held the
house ;
A haunt of brawling seamen once, but
now
Still, with yet a bed for wandering
men
There Enoch rested silent many days.

But Miriam Lane was good and garrulous,
Nor let him be, but often breaking in,
Told him, with other annals of the port,
Not knowing—Enoch was so brown,
So bow'd,
So broken—all the story of his house.
His baby's death, her growing poverty,
How Philip put her little ones to school,
And kept them in it, his long wooing her,
Her slow consent, and marriage, and the birth
Of Philip's child: and o'er his countenance
No shadow past, nor motion: any one,
Regarding, well had deem'd he felt the tale
Less than the teller: only when she closed
'Enoch, poor man, was cast away and lost'
He, shaking his gray head pathetically,
Repeated muttering 'cast away and lost';
Again in deeper inward whispers
'lost!'

But Enoch yearn'd to see her face again;
'If I might look on her sweet face again
And know that she is happy.' So the thought
Haunted and harass'd him, and drove him forth,
At evening when the dull November day
Was growing duller twilight, to the hill.
There he sat down gazing on all below;
There did a thousand memories roll upon him,
Unspeakable for sadness. By and by
The ruddy square of comfortable light,
Far-blazing from the rear of Philip's house,
Allured him, as the beacon-blaze allures

The bird of passage, till he madly strikes
Against it, and beats out his weary life.

For Philip's dwelling fronted on the street,
The latest house to landward; but behind,
With one small gate that open'd on the waste,
Flourish'd a little garden square and wall'd:
And in it throve an ancient evergreen,
A yewtree, and all round it ran a walk
Of shingle, and a walk divided it:
But Enoch shunn'd the middle walk and stole
Up by the wall, behind the yew; and thence
That which he better might have shunn'd, if griefs
Like his have worse or better, Enoch saw.

For cups and silver on the burnish'd board
Sparkled and shone; so genial was the hearth:
And on the right hand of the hearth he saw
Philip, the slighted suitor of old times,
Stout, rosy, with his babe across his knees;
And o'er her second father stoopt a girl,
A later but a loftier Annie Lee,
Fair-hair'd and tall, and from her lifted hand
Dangled a length of ribbon and a ring
To tempt the babe, who rear'd his creasy arms,
Caught at and ever miss'd it, and they laugh'd;
And on the left hand of the hearth he saw
The mother glancing often toward her babe,
But turning now and then to speak with him,
Her son, who stood beside her tall and strong,
And saying that which pleased him, for he smiled.

Now when the dead man come to
 life beheld
 His wife his wife no more, and saw
 the babe
 Hers, yet not his, upon the father's
 knee,
 And all the warmth, the peace, the
 happiness,
 And his own children tall and beauti-
 ful,
 And him, that other, reigning in his
 place,
 Lord of his rights and of his children's
 love,—
 Then he, tho' Miriam Lane had told
 him all,
 Because things seen are mightier than
 things heard,
 Stagger'd and shook, holding the
 branch, and fear'd
 To send abroad a shrill and terrible
 cry,
 Which in one moment, like the blast
 of doom,
 Would shatter all the happiness of the
 hearth.

He therefore turning softly like a
 thief,
 Lest the harsh shingle should grate
 underfoot,
 And feeling all along the garden-
 wall,
 Lest he should swoon and tumble and
 be found,
 Crept to the gate, and open'd it, and
 closed,
 As lightly as a sick man's chamber-
 door,
 Behind him, and came out upon the
 waste.

And there he would have knelt, but
 that his knees
 Were feeble, so that falling prone he
 dug
 His fingers into the wet earth, and
 pray'd.

'Too hard to bear! why did they
 take me thence?
 O God Almighty, blessed Saviour,
 Thou

That didst uphold me on my lonely
 isle,
 Uphold me, Father, in my loneliness
 A little longer! aid me, give me
 strength
 Not to tell her, never to let her know.
 Help me not to break in upon her
 peace.
 My children too! must I not speak to
 these?
 They know me not. I should betray
 myself.
 Never: No father's kiss for me—the
 girl
 So like her mother, and the boy, my
 son.'

There speech and thought and nature
 fail'd a little,
 And he lay tranced; but when he rose
 and paced
 Back toward his solitary home again,
 All down the long and narrow street
 he went
 Beating it in upon his weary brain,
 As tho' it were the burthen of a song,
 'Not to tell her, never to let her
 know.'

He was not all unhappy. His re-
 solve
 Upbore him, and firm faith, and ever-
 more
 Prayer from a living source within the
 will,
 And beating up thro' all the bitter
 world,
 Like fountains of sweet water in the
 sea,
 Kept him a living soul. 'This miller's
 wife'
 He said to Miriam 'that you spoke
 about,
 Has she no fear that her first hus-
 band lives?'
 'Ay, ay, poor soul' said Miriam,
 'fear enow!
 If you could tell her you had seen him
 dead,
 Why, that would be her comfort;'
 and he thought
 'After the Lord has call'd me she
 shall know.

I wait His time,' and Enoch set himself,
 Scorning an alms, to work whereby to live.
 Almost to all things could he turn his hand.
 Cooper he was and carpenter, and wrought
 To make the boatmen fishing-nets, or help'd
 At lading and unlading the tall barks,
 That brought the stinted commerce of those days;
 Thus earn'd a scanty living for himself:
 Yet since he did but labor for himself,
 Work without hope, there was not life in it
 Whereby the man could live; and as the year
 Roll'd itself round again to meet the day
 When Enoch had return'd, a languor came
 Upon him, gentle sickness, gradually
 Weakening the man, till he could do no more,
 But kept the house, his chair, and last his bed.
 And Enoch bore his weakness cheerfully.
 For sure no gladlier does the stranded wreck
 See thro' the gray skirts of a lifting squall
 The boat that bears the hope of life approach
 To save the life despair'd of, than he saw
 Death dawning on him, and the close of all.

For thro' that dawning gleam'd a kindlier hope
 On Enoch thinking 'after I am gone,
 Then may she learn I lov'd her to the last.'
 He call'd aloud for Miriam Lane and said
 'Woman, I have a secret—only swear,
 Before I tell you—swear upon the book
 Not to reveal it, till you see me dead.'

'Dead,' clamor'd the good woman,
 'hear him talk!
 I warrant, man, that we shall bring you round.'
 'Swear' added Enoch sternly, 'on the book.'
 And on the book, half-frighted, Miriam swore.
 Then Enoch rolling his gray eyes upon her,
 'Did you know Enoch Arden of this town?'
 'Know him?' she said, 'I knew him far away.
 Ay, ay, I mind him coming down the street;
 Held his head high, and cared for no man, he.'
 Slowly and sadly Enoch answer'd her;
 'His head is low, and no man cares for him.
 I think I have not three days more to live;
 I am the man.' At which the woman gave
 A half-incredulous, half-hysterical cry.
 'You Arden, you! nay,—sure he was a foot
 Higher than you be.' Enoch said again
 'My God has bow'd me down to what I am;
 My grief and solitude have broken me;
 Nevertheless, know you that I am he
 Who married—but that name has twice been changed—
 I married her who married Philip Ray.
 Sit, listen.' Then he told her of his voyage,
 His wreck, his lonely life, his coming back,
 His gazing in on Annie, his resolve,
 And how he kept it. As the woman heard,
 Fast flow'd the current of her easy tears,
 While in her heart she yearn'd incessantly
 To rush abroad all round the little haven,
 Proclaiming Enoch Arden and his woes;

But awed and promise-bounden she
forbore,
Saying only 'See your bairns before
you go!
Eh, let me fetch 'em, Arden,' and
arose
Eager to bring them down, for Enoch
hung
A moment on her words, but then re-
plied:

'Woman, disturb me not now at the
last,
But let me hold my purpose till I die.
Sit down again; mark me and under-
stand,
While I have power to speak. I
charge you now,
When you shall see her, tell her that
I died
Blessing her, praying for her, loving
her;
Save for the bar between us, loving
her
As when she laid her head beside my
own.
And tell my daughter Annie, whom I
saw
So like her mother, that my latest
breath
Was spent in blessing her and praying
for her.
And tell my son that I died blessing
him.'
And say to Philip that I blest him
too;
He never meant us anything but good.
But if my children care to see me
dead,
Who hardly knew me living, let them
come,
I am 'their father; but she must not
come,
For my dead face would vex her after-
life.
And now there is but one of all my
blood
Who will embrace me in the world-to-
be:
This hair is his: she cut it off and
gave it,
And I have borne it with me all these
years.

And thought to bear it with me to my
grave;
But now my mind is changed, for I
shall see him,
My babe in bliss: wherefore when I
am gone,
Take, give her this, for it may comfort
her:
It will moreover be a token to her,
That I am he.'

He ceased; and Miriam Lane
Made such a voluble answer promis-
ing all,
That once again he roll'd his eyes upon
her
Repeating all he wish'd, and once
again
She promised.

Then the third night after this,
While Enoch slumber'd motionless
and pale,
And Miriam watch'd and dozed at in-
tervals,
There came so loud a calling of the
sea,
That all the houses in the haven
rang.
He woke, he rose, he spread his arms
abroad
Crying with a loud voice 'A sail! a
sail!
I am saved;' and so fell back and
spoke no more.

So past the strong heroic soul away.
And when they buried him the little
port
Had seldom seen a costlier funeral.

THE BROOK.

HERE, by this brook, we parted; I to
the East
And he for Italy—too late—too late:
One whom the strong sons of the
world despise;
For lucky rhymes to him were scrip
and share,

And mellow metres more than cent
for cent;
Nor could he understand how money
breeds,
Thought it a dead thing; yet himself
could make
The thing that is not as the thing that
is.
O had he lived! In our schoolbooks
we say,
Of those that held their heads above
the crowd,
They flourish'd then or then; but life
in him
Could scarce be said to flourish, only
touch'd
On such a time as goes before the leaf,
When all the wood stands in a mist
of green,
And nothing perfect: yet the brook
he loved,
For which, in braiding summers of
Bengal,
Or ev'n the sweet half-English Neil-
gherry air
I panted, seems, as I re-listen to it,
Prattling the primrose fancies of the
boy,
To me that loved him; for 'O brook,'
he says,
'O babbling brook,' says Edmund in
his rhyme,
'Whence come you?' and the brook,
why not? replies.

I come from haunts of coot and hern,
I make a sudden sally,
And sparkle out among the fern,
To bicker down a valley.

By thirty hills I hurry down,
Or slip between the ridges,
By twenty thorns, a little town,
And half a hundred bridges.

Till last by Philip's farm I flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

'Poor lad, he died at Florence, quite
worn out,
Travelling to Naples. There is Darn-
ley bridge,

It has more ivy; there the river; and
there
Stands Philip's farm where brook
and river meet.

I chatter over stony ways,
In little sharps and trebles,
I bubble into eddying bays,
I babble on the pebbles.

With many a curve my banks I fret
By many a field and fallow,
And many a fairy foreland set
With willow-weed and mallow.

I chatter, chatter, as I flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

'But Philip chatter'd more than
brook or bird;
Old Philip; all about the fields you
caught
His weary daylong chirping, like the
dry
High-elbow'd grigs that leap in sum-
mer grass.

I wind about, and in and out,
With here a blossom sailing,
And here and there a lusty trout,
And here and there a grayling,

And here and there a foamy flake
Upon me, as I travel
With many a silvery water-break
Above the golden gravel,

And draw them all along, and flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

'O darling Katie Willows, his one
child!
A maiden of our century, yet most
meek;
A daughter of our meadows, yet not
coarse;
Straight, but as lissome as a hazel
wand;
Her eyes a bashful azure, and her
hair

In gloss and hue the chestnut, when
the shell
Divides threefold to show the fruit
within.

'Sweet Katie, once I did her a good
turn,
Her and her far-off cousin and be-
trothed,
James Willows, of one name and
heart with her.
For here I came, twenty years back—
the week
Before I parted with poor Edmund;
cross
By that old bridge which, half in ruins
then,
Still makes a hoary eyebrow for the
gleam
Beyond it, where the waters marry—
cross,
Whistling a random bar of Bonny
Doon,
And push'd at Philip's garden-gate.
The gate,
Half-parted from a weak and scolding
hinge,
Stuck; and he clamor'd from a case-
ment, "Run"
To Katie somewhere in the walks be-
low,
"Run, Katie!" Katie never ran:
she moved
To meet me, winding under woodbine
bowers,
A little flutter'd, with her eyelids
down,
Fresh apple-blossom, blushing for a
boon.

'What was it? less of sentiment
than sense
Had Katie; not illiterate; nor of
those
Who dabbling in the fount of fictive
tears,
And nursed by mealy-mouth'd philan-
thropies,
Divorce the Feeling from her mate
the Deed.

'She told me. She and James had
quarrell'd. Why?

What cause of quarrel? None, she
said, no cause;
James had no cause: but when I
prest the cause,
I learnt that James had flickering jea-
lousies
Which anger'd her. Who anger'd
James? I said.
But Katie snatch'd her eyes at once
from mine,
And sketching with her slender
pointed foot
Some figure like a wizard pentagram
On garden gravel, let my query
pass
Unclaim'd, in flushing silence, till I
ask'd
If James were coming. "Coming
every day,"
She answer'd, "ever longing to ex-
plain,
But evermore her father came across
With some long-winded tale, and
broke him short;
And James departed vex'd with him
and her."
How could I help her? "Would I—
was it wrong?"
(Claspt hands and that petitionary
grace
Of sweet seventeen subdued me ere
she spoke)
"O would I take her father for one
hour,
For one half-hour, and let him talk to
me!"
And even while she spoke, I saw
where James
Made toward us, like a wader in the
surf,
Beyond the brook, waist-deep in
meadow-sweet.

'O Katie, what I suffer'd for your
sake!
For in I went, and call'd old Philip
out
To show the farm: full willingly he
rose:
He led me thro' the short sweet-
smelling lanes
Of his wheat-suburb, babbling as he
went.

He praised his land, his horses, his
 machines;
 He praised his ploughs, his cows, his
 hogs, his dogs;
 He praised his hens, his geese, his
 guinea-hens;
 His pigeons, who in session on their
 roofs
 Approved him, bowing at their own
 deserts:
 Then from the plaintive mother's teat
 he took
 Her blind and shuddering puppies,
 naming each,
 And naming those, his friends, for
 whom they were:
 Then crost the common into Darnley
 chase
 To show Sir Arthur's deer. In
 copse and fern
 Twinkled the innumerable ear and
 tail.
 Then, seated on a serpent-rooted
 beech,
 He pointed out a pasturing colt, and
 said:
 "That was the four-year-old I sold
 the Squire."
 And there he told a long long-winded
 tale
 Of how the Squire had seen the colt
 at grass,
 And how it was the thing his daughter
 wish'd,
 And how he sent the bailiff to the farm
 To learn the price, and what the price
 he ask'd.
 And how the bailiff swore that he was
 mad,
 But he stood firm; and so the matter
 hung;
 He gave them line: and five days after
 that
 He met the bailiff at the Golden
 Fleece,
 Who then and there had offer'd some-
 thing more,
 But he stood firm; and so the matter
 hung;
 He knew the man; the colt would
 fetch its price;
 He gave them line: and how by
 chance at last

(It might be May or April, he forgot,
 The last of April or the first of May)
 He found the bailiff riding by the
 farm,
 And, talking from the point, he drew
 him in,
 And there he mellow'd all his heart
 with ale,
 Until they closed a bargain, hand in
 hand.

'Then, while I breathed in sight of
 haven, he,
 Poor fellow, could he help it? recom-
 menced,
 And ran thro' all the coltish chronicle,
 Wild Will, Black Bess, Tantivy,
 Tallyho,
 Reform, White Rose, Bellerophon,
 the Jilt,
 Arbaces, and Phenomenon, and the
 rest,
 Till, not to die a listener, I arose,
 And with me Philip, talking still; and
 so
 We turn'd our foreheads from the
 falling sun,
 And following our own shadows thrice
 as long
 As when they follow'd us from Philip's
 door,
 Arrived, and found the sun of sweet
 content
 Re-risen in Katie's eyes, and all
 things well.

I steal by lawns and grassy plots,
 I slide by hazel covers;
 I move the sweet forget-me-nots
 That grow for happy lovers.

I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance,
 Among my skimming swallows;
 I make the netted sunbeam dance
 Against my sandy shallows.

I murmur under moon and stars
 In brambly wildernesses;
 I linger by my shingly bars;
 I loiter round my cresses;

And out again I curve and flow
 To join the brimming river,
 For men may come and men may go,
 But I go on for ever.

Yes, men may come and go; and
these are gone,
All gone. My dearest brother, Ed-
mund, sleeps,
Not by the well-known stream and
rustic spire,
But unfamiliar Arno, and the dome
Of Brunelleschi; sleeps in peace: and
he,
Poor Philip, of all his lavish waste *of*
words
Remains the lean P. W. on his tomb:
I scraped the lichen from it: Katie
walks
By the long wash of Australasian seas
Far off, and holds her head to other
stars,
And breathes in April-autumns. All
are gone.'

So Lawrence Aylmer, seated on a
stile
In the long hedge, and rolling in his
mind
Old waits of rhyme, and bowing o'er
the brook
A tansured head in middle age for-
lorn,
Mused, and was mute. On a sudden
a low breath
Of tender air made tremble in the
hedge
The fragile bindweed-bells and briony
rings;
And he look'd up. There stood a
maiden near,
Waiting to pass. In much amaze he
stared
On eyes a bashful azure, and on hair
In gloss and hue the chestnut, when
the shell
Divides threefold to show the fruit
within:
Then, wondering, ask'd her 'Are you
from the farm?'
'Yes,' answer'd she. 'Pray stay a
little: pardon me;
What do they call you?' 'Katie.'
'That were strange.
What surname?' 'Willows.' 'No!'
'That is my name.'
'Indeed!' and here he look'd so
self-perplexed,

That Katie laugh'd, and laughing
blush'd, till he
Laugh'd also, but as one before he
wakes,
Who feels a glimmering strangeness
in his dream.
Then looking at her; 'Too happy,
fresh and fair,
Too fresh and fair in our sad world's
best bloom,
To be the ghost of one who bore your
name
About these meadows, twenty years
ago.'

'Have you not heard?' said Katie,
'we came back.
We bought the farm we tenanted
before.
Am I so like her? so they said on
board.
Sir, if you knew her in her English
days,
My mother, as it seems you did, the
days
That most she loves to talk of, come
with me.
My brother James is in the harvest-
field:
But she—you will be welcome—O,
come in!'

AYLMER'S FIELD.

1793.

DUST are our frames; and, gilded
dust, our pride
Looks only for a moment whole and
sound;
Like that long-buried body of the
king,
Found lying with his urns and orna-
ments,
Which at a touch of light, an air of
heaven,
Slipt into ashes, and was found no
more.

Here is a story which in rougher
shape

Came from a grizzled cripple, whom I
 saw
 Sunning himself in a waste field
 alone—
 Old, and a mine of memories—who
 had served,
 Long since, a bygone Rector of the
 place,
 And been himself a part of what he
 told.

SIR AYLMER AYLMEER, that almighty
 man,
 The county God—in whose capacious
 hall,
 Hung with a hundred shields, the
 family tree
 Sprang from the midriff of a prostrate
 king—
 Whose blazing wyvern weathercock'd
 the spire,
 Stood from his walls and wing'd his
 entry-gates
 And swang besides on many a windy
 sign—
 Whose eyes from under a pyramidal
 head
 Saw from his windows nothing save
 his own—
 What lover of his own had he than
 her,
 His only child, his Edith, whom he
 loved
 As heiress and not heir regretfully?
 But 'he that marries her marries her
 name.'
 This fiat somewhat soothed himself
 and wife,
 His wife a faded beauty of the Baths,
 Insipid as the Queen upon a card;
 Her all of thought and bearing hardly
 more
 Than his own shadow in a sickly sun.

A land of hops and poppy-mingled
 corn,
 Little about it stirring save a brook!
 A sleepy land, where under the same
 wheel
 The same old rut would deepen year
 by year,
 Where almost all the village had one
 name;

Where Aylmer followed Aylmer at
 the Hall
 And Averill Averill at the Rectory
 Thrice over; so that Rectory and
 Hall,
 Bound in an immemorial intimacy,
 Were open to each other; tho' to
 dream
 That Love could bind them closer
 well had made
 The hoar hair of the Baronet bristle
 up
 With horror, worse than had he heard
 his priest
 Preach an inverted scripture, sons of
 men
 Daughters of God; so sleepy was the
 land.

And might not Averill, had he
 will'd it so,
 Somewhere beneath his own low
 range of roofs,
 Have also set his many-shielded
 tree?
 There was an Aylmer-Averill mar-
 riage once.
 When the red rose was redder than
 itself,
 And York's white rose as red as Lan-
 caster's,
 With wounded peace which each had
 prick'd to death.
 'Not proven' Averill said, or laugh-
 ingly
 'Some other race of Averills'—prov'n
 or no,
 What cared he? what, if other or the
 same?
 He lean'd not on his fathers but him-
 self.
 But Leolin, his brother, living oft
 With Averill, and a year or two be-
 fore
 Call'd to the bar, but ever call'd away
 By one low voice to one dear neigh-
 borhood,
 Would often, in his walks with Edith,
 claim
 A distant kinship to the gracious
 blood
 That shook the heart of Edith hear-
 ing him.

Sanguine he was : a but less vivid
hue
Than of that islet in the chestnut-
bloom
Flamed in his cheek ; and eager eyes,
that still
Took joyful note of all things joyful,
beam'd,
Beneath a manlike mass of rolling
gold,
Their best and brightest, when they
dwelt on hers,
Edith, whose pensive beauty, perfect
else,
But subject to the season or the mood,
Shone like a mystic star between the
less
And greater glory varying to and fro,
We know not wherefore ; bounteously
made,
And yet so finely, that a troublous
touch
Thinn'd, or would seem to thin her in
a day,
A joyous to dilate, as toward the light.
And these had been together from
the first.
Leolin's first nurse was, five years
after, hers :
So much the boy foreran ; but when
his date
Doubled her own, for want of play-
mates, he
(Since Averill was a decad and a half
His elder, and their parents under-
ground)
Had tost his ball and flown his kite,
and roll'd
His hoop to pleasure Edith, with her
dip
Against the rush of the air in the
prone swing,
Made blossom-ball or daisy-chain,
arranged
Her garden, sow'd her name and kept
it green
In living letters, told her fairy-tales,
Show'd her the fairy footings on the
grass,
The little dells of cowslip, fairy palms,
The petty maretail forest, fairy
pines,
Or from the tiny pitted target blew

What look'd a flight of fairy arrows
aim'd
All at one mark, all hitting : make-be-
lieves
For Edith and himself : or else he
forged,
But that was later, boyish histories
Of battle, bold adventure, dungeon,
wreck,
Flights, terrors, sudden rescues, and
true love
Crown'd after trial ; sketches rude
and faint,
But where a passion yet unborn per-
haps
Lay hidden as the music of the moon
Sleeps in the plain eggs of the night-
ingale.
And thus together, save for college-
times
Or Temple-eaten terms, a couple, fair
As ever painter painted, poet sang,
Or Heaven in lavish bounty moulded,
grew.
And more and more, the maiden
woman-grown,
He wasted hours with Averill ; there,
when first
The tented winter-field was broken
up
Into that phalanx of the summer spears
That soon should wear the garland ;
there again
When burr and bine were gather'd ;
lastly there
At Christmas ; ever welcome at the
Hall,
On whose dull sameness his full tide
of youth
Broke with a phosphorescence charm-
ing even
My lady ; and the Baronet yet had
laid
No bar between them : dull and self-
involved,
Tall and erect, but bending from his
height
With half-allowing smiles for all the
world,
And mighty courteous in the main—
his pride
Lay deeper than to wear it as his ring—
He, like an Aylmer in his Aylmerism.

Would care no more for Leolin's
walking with her
Than for his old Newfoundland's,
when they ran
To loose him at the stables, for he
rose
Twofooted at the limit of his chain,
Roaring to make a third; and how
should Love,
Whom the cross-lightnings of four
chancemet eyes
Flash into fiery life from nothing,
follow
Such dear familiarities of dawn?
Seldom, but when he does, Master of
all.

So these young hearts not knowing
that they loved,
Not she at least, nor conscious of a
bar
Between them, nor by plight or broken
ring
Bound, but an immemorial intimacy,
Wander'd at will, and oft accompanied
By Averill: his, a brother's love, that
hung
With wings of brooding shelter o'er
her peace,
Might have been other, save for
Leolin's—
Who knows? but so they wander'd,
hour by hour
Gather'd the blossom that rebloom'd,
and drank
The magic cup that fill'd itself anew.

A whisper half reveal'd her to her-
self.
For out beyond her lodges, where the
brook
Vocal, with here and there a silence,
ran
By sallow rims, arose the laborers'
homes,
A frequent haunt of Edith, on low
knolls
That dimpling died into each other,
huts
At random scatter'd, each a nest in
bloom.
Her art, her hand, her counsel all had
wrought

About them: here was one that, sum-
mer-blanch'd,
Was parcel-bearded with the trav-
eller's-joy
In Autumn, parcel ivy-clad; and here
The warm-blue breathings of a hidden
hearth
Broke from a bower of vine and
honeysuckle:
One look'd all rosetree, and another
wore
A close-set robe of jasmine sown
with stars:
This had a rosy sea of gillyflowers
About it; this, a milky-way on earth,
Like visions in the Northern
dreamer's heavens,
A lily-avenue climbing to the doors;
One, almost to the martin-haunted
eaves
A summer burial deep in hollyhocks;
Each, its own charm; and Edith's
everywhere;
And Edith ever visitant with him,
He but less loved than Edith, of her
poor:
For she—so lowly-lovely and so lov-
ing,
Queenly responsive when the loyal
hand
Rose from the clay it work'd in as she
past,
Not sowing hedgerow texts and pas-
sing by,
Nor dealing goodly counsel from a
height
That makes the lowest hate it, but a
voice
Of comfort and an open hand of help,
A splendid presence flattering the
poor roofs
Revered as theirs, but kindlier than
themselves
To ailing wife or wailing infancy
Or old bedridden palsy,—was adored;
He, loved for her and for himself. A
grasp
Having the warmth and muscle of
the heart,
A childly way with children, and a
laugh
Ringing like proven golden coinage
true,

Were no false passport to that easy
realm,
Where once with Leolin at her side the
girl,
Nursing a child, and turning to the
warmth
The tender pink five-beaded baby-
soles,
Heard the good mother softly whisper
'Bless,
God bless 'em: marriages are made
in Heaven.'

A flash of semi-jealousy clear'd it
to her.
My lady's Indian kinsman unan-
nounced
With half a score of swarthy faces
came.
His own, tho' keen and bold and
soldierly
Sear'd by the close ecliptic, was not
fair;
Fairer his talk, a tongue that ruled
the hour,
Tho' seeming boastful: so when first
he dash'd
Into the chronicle of a deedful day,
Sir Aylmer half forgot his lazy smile
Of patron 'Good! my lady's kins-
man! good!'
My lady with her fingers interlock'd,
And rotatory thumbs on silken knees,
Call'd all her vital spirits into each
ear
To listen: unawares they flitted off,
Busying themselves about the flower-
age
That stood from out a stiff brocade in
which,
The meteor of a splendid season, she,
Once with this kinsman, ah so long
ago,
Stept thro' the stately minuet of those
days:
But Edith's eager fancy hurried with
him
Snatch'd thro' the perilous passes of
his life:
Till Leolin ever watchful of her eye,
Hated him with a momentary hate.
Wife-hunting, as the rumor ran, was
he:

I know not, for he spoke not, only
shower'd
His oriental gifts on everyone
And most on Edith: like a storm he
came,
And shook the house, and like a
storm he went.

Among the gifts he left her (possibly
He flow'd and ebb'd uncertain, to re-
turn
When others had been tested) there
was one,
A dagger, in rich sheath with jewels
on it
Sprinkled about in gold that branch'd
itself
Fine as ice-ferns on January panes
Made by a breath. I know not
whence at first,
Nor of what race, the work; but as
he told
The story, storming a hill-fort of
thieves
He got it; for their captain after
fight,
His comrades having fought their
last below,
Was climbing up the valley; at
whom he shot:
Down from the beetling crag to which
he clung
Tumbled the tawny rascal at his feet,
This dagger with him, which when
now admired
By Edith whom his pleasure was to
please,
At once the costly Sahib yielded to her.

And Leolin, coming after he was
gone,
Tost over all her presents petulantly:
And when she show'd the wealthy
scabbard, saying
'Look what a lovely piece of work-
manship!'
Slight was his answer 'Well—I care
not for it.'
Then playing with the blade he
prick'd his hand,
'A gracious gift to give a lady, this!'
'But would it be more gracious' ask'd
the girl

'Were I to give this gift of his to one
That is no lady?' 'Gracious? No'
said he.

'Me?—but I cared not for it. O pardon me,

I seem to be ungraciousness itself.'

'Take it' she added sweetly, 'tho' his gift;

For I am more ungracious ev'n than you,

I care not for it either;' and he said

'Why then I love it: but Sir Aylmer past,

And neither loved nor liked the thing he heard.

The next day came a neighbor.
Blues and reds

They talk'd of: blues were sure of it,
he thought:

Then of the latest fox—where started
—kill'd

In such a bottom: 'Peter had the
brush,

My Peter, first;' and did Sir Aylmer
know

That great pock-pitten fellow had
been caught?

Then made his pleasure echo, hand to
hand,

And rolling as it were the substance
of it

Between his palms a moment up and
down—

'The birds were warm, the birds were
warm upon him;

We have him now:' and had Sir Aylmer heard—

Nay, but he must—the land was ringing of it—

This blacksmith border-marriage—
one they knew—

Raw from the nursery—who could
trust a child?

That cursed France with her egalities!

And did Sir Aylmer (deferentially
With nearing chair and lower'd
accent) think—

For people talk'd—that it was wholly
wise

To let that handsome fellow Averill
walk

So freely with his daughter? people
talk'd—

The boy might get a notion into him;
The girl might be entangled ere she
knew.

Sir Aylmer Aylmer slowly stiffening
spoke:

'The girl and boy, Sir, know their
differences!'

'Good,' said his friend, 'but watch!' and he, 'Enough,

More than enough, Sir! I can guard
my own.'

They parted, and Sir Aylmer Aylmer
watch'd.

Pale, for on her the thunders of the
house

Had fallen first, was Edith that same
night;

Pale as the Jephtha's daughter, a
rough piece

Of early rigid color, under which
Withdrawing by the counter door to
that

Which Leolin open'd, she cast back
upon him

A piteous glance, and vanish'd. He,
as one

Caught in a burst of unexpected
storm,

And pelted with outrageous epithets,
Turning beheld the Powers of the
House

On either side the hearth, indignant;
her,

Cooling her false cheek with a
featherfan,

Him, glaring, by his own stale devil
spurr'd,

And, like a beast hard-ridden, breathing
hard.

'Ungenerous, dishonorable, base,
Presumptuous! trusted as he was
with her,

The sole succeder to their wealth,
their lands,

The last remaining pillar of their
house,

The one transmitter of their ancient
name,

Their child.' 'Our child!' 'Our
heirress!' 'Ours!' for still,



"OR WHILE THE PATCH WAS WORN."—Page 69.



Like echoes from beyond a hollow,
came
Her sicklier iteration. Last he said,
'Boy, mark me! for your fortunes
are to make.
I swear you shall not make them out
of mine.
Now inasmuch as you have practised
on her,
Perplext her, made her half forget
herself,
Swerve from her duty to herself and
us—
Things in an Aylmer deen'd impossi-
ble,
Far as we track ourselves—I say that
this—
Else I withdraw favor and counte-
nance
From you and yours for ever—shall
you do.
Sir, when you see her—but you shall
not see her—
No, you shall write, and not to her,
but me:
And you shall say that having spoken
with me,
And after look'd into yourself, you
find
That you meant nothing—as indeed
you know
That you meant nothing. Such a
match as this!
Impossible, prodigious!' These were
words,
As meted by his measure of him-
self,
Arguing boundless forbearance after
which,
And Leolin's horror-stricken an-
swer, 'I
So foul a traitor to myself and her,
Never oh never,' for about as long
As the wind-hover hangs in balance,
paused
Sir Aylmer reddening from the storm
within,
Then broke all bonds of courtesy, and
crying
'Boy, should I find you by my doors
again,
My men shall lash you from them like
a dog;

Hence!' with a sudden execration
drove
The footstool from before him, and
arose;
So, stammering 'scoundrel' out of
teeth that ground
As in a dreadful dream, while Leolin
still
Retreated half-aghast, the fierce old
man
Follow'd, and under his own lintel
stood
Storming with lifted hands, a hoary
face
Meet for the reverence of the hearth,
but now,
Beneath a pale and unimpassion'd
moon,
Vext with unworthy madness, and
deform'd.

Slowly and conscious of the rageful
eye
That watch'd him, till he heard the
ponderous door
Close, crashing with long echoes thro'
the land,
Went Leolin; then, his passions all
in flood
And masters of his motion, furi-
ously
Down thro' the bright lawns to his
brother's ran,
And foam'd away his heart at Aver-
ill's ear:
Whom Averill solaced as he might,
amazed:
The man was his, had been his father's,
friend:
He must have seen, himself had seen
it long;
He must have known, himself had
known: besides,
He never yet had set his daughter
forth
Here in the woman-markets of the
west,
Where our Caucasians let themselves
be sold.
Some one, he thought, had slander'd
Leolin to him.
'Brother, for I have loved you more
as son

Than brother, let me tell you: I myself—

What is their pretty saying? jilted, is it?

Jilted I was: I say it for your peace. Pain'd, and, as bearing in myself the shame

The woman should have borne, humiliated,

I lived for years a stunted sunless life; Till after our good parents past away

Watching your growth, I seem'd again to grow.

Leolin, I almost sin in envying you: The very whitest lamb in all my fold

Loves you: I know her: the worst thought she has

Is whiter even than her pretty hand: She must prove true: for, brother, where two fight

The strongest wins, and truth and love are strength,

And you are happy: let her parents be.

But Leolin cried out the more upon them—

Insolent, brainless, heartless! heiress, wealth,

Their wealth, their heiress! wealth enough was theirs

For twenty matches. Were he lord of this,

Why twenty boys and girls should marry on it,

And forty blest ones bless him, and himself

Be wealthy still, ay wealthier. He believed

This filthy marriage-hindering Mammon made

The harlot of the cities: nature crost Was mother of the foul adulteries

That saturate soul with body. Name, too! name,

Their ancient name! they *might* be proud; its worth

Was being Edith's. Ah how pale she had look'd

Darling, to-night! they must have rated her

Beyond all tolerance. These old pheasant-lords,

These partridge-breeders of a thousand years,

Who had mildew'd in their thousands, doing nothing

Since Egbert—why, the greater their disgrace!

Fall back upon a name! rest, rot in that!

Not *keep* it noble, make it nobler? fools,

With such a vantage-ground for nobleness!

He had known a man, a quintessence of man,

The life of all—who madly loved—and he,

Thwarted by one of these old father-fools,

Had rioted his life out, and made an end.

He would not do it! her sweet face and faith

Held him from that: but he had powers, he knew it:

Back would he to his studies, make a name,

Name, fortune too: the world should ring of him

To shame these mouldy Aylmers in their graves:

Chancellor, or what is greatest would he be—

'O brother, I am grieved to learn your grief—

Give me my fling, and let me say my say.'

At which, like one that sees his own excess,

And easily forgives it as his own, He laugh'd; and then was mute; but presently

Wept like a storm: and honest Averill seeing

How low his brother's mood had fallen, fetch'd

His richest beeswing from a binn reserved

For banquets, praised the waning red, and told

The vintage—when *this* Aylmer came
 of age—
 Then drank and past it; till at length
 the two,
 Tho' Leolin flamed and fell again,
 agreed
 That much allowance must be made
 for men.
 After an angry dream this kindlier
 glow
 Faded with morning, but his purpose
 held.

Yet once by night again the lovers
 met,
 A perilous meeting under the tall
 pines
 That darken'd all the northward of
 her Hall.
 Him, to her meek and modest bosom
 prest
 In agony, she promised that no force,
 Persuasion, no, nor death could alter
 her;
 He, passionately hopefuller, would
 go,
 Labor for his own Edith, and return
 In such a sunlight of prosperity
 He should not be rejected. 'Write to
 me!
 They loved me, and because I love
 their child
 They hate me: there is war between
 us, dear,
 Which breaks all bonds but ours; we
 must remain
 Sacred to one another.' So they
 talk'd,
 Poor children, for their comfort: the
 wind blew;
 The rain of heaven, and their own
 bitter tears,
 Tears, and the careless rain of heaven,
 mixt
 Upon their faces, as they kiss'd each
 other
 In darkness, and above them roar'd
 the pine.

So Leolin went; and as we task our-
 selves
 To learn a language known but
 smatteringly

In phrases here and there at random,
 toil'd
 Mastering the lawless science of our
 law,
 That codeless myriad of precedent.
 That wilderness of single instances.
 Thro' which a few, by wit or fortune
 led,
 May beat a pathway out to wealth and
 fame.
 The jests, that flash'd about the
 pleader's room,
 Lightning of the hour, the pun, the
 scurrilous tale,—
 Old scandals buried now seven decads
 deep
 In other scandals that have lived and
 died,
 And left the living scandal that shall
 die—
 Were dead to him already; bent as he
 was
 To make disproof of scorn, and strong
 in hopes,
 And prodigal of all brain-labor he,
 Charier of sleep, and wine, and exer-
 cise,
 Except when for a breathing-while at
 eve,
 Some niggard fraction of an hour, he
 ran
 Beside the river-bank: and then
 indeed
 Harder the times were, and the hands
 of power
 Were bloodier, and the according
 hearts of men
 Seem'd harder too; but the soft river-
 breeze,
 Which fann'd the gardens of that
 rival rose
 Yet fragrant in a heart remembering
 His former talks with Edith, on him
 breathed
 Far purer in his rushings to and fro,
 After his books, to flush his blood
 with air,
 Then to his books again. My lady's
 cousin,
 Half-sickening of his pension'd after-
 noon,
 Drove in upon the student once or
 twice,

Ran a Malayan amuck against the
times,
Had golden hopes for France and all
mankind,
Answer'd all queries touching those at
home
With a heaved shoulder and a saucy
smile,
And fain had haled him out into the
world,
And air'd him there: his nearer friend
would say
'Screw not the chord too sharply lest
it snap.'
Then left alone he pluck'd her dagger
forth
From where his worldless heart had
kept it warm,
Kissing his vows upon it like a
knight.
And wrinkled benchers often talk'd of
him
Approvingly, and prophesied his rise:
For heart, I think, help'd head: her
letters too,
Tho' far between, and coming fitfully
Like broken music, written as she
found
Or made occasion, being strictly
watch'd,
Charm'd him thro' every labyrinth till
he saw
An end, a hope, a light breaking upon
him.

But they that cast her spirit into
flesh,
Her worldly-wise begetters, plagued
themselves
To sell her, those good parents, for
her good.
Whatever eldest-born of rank or
wealth
Might lie within their compass, him
they lured
Into their net made pleasant by the
baits
Of gold and beauty, wooing him to
woo.
So month by month the noise about
their doors,
And distant blaze of those dull ban-
quets, made

The nightly wirer of their innocent
hare
Falter before he took it. All in vain.
Sullen, defiant, pitying, wroth, return'd
Leolin's rejected rivals from their suit
So often, that the folly taking wings
Slipt o'er those lazy limits down the
wind
With rumor, and became in other
fields
A mockery to the yeomen over ale,
And laughter to their lords: but those
at home,
As hunters round a hunted creature
draw
The cordon close and closer toward
the death,
Narrow'd her goings out and comings
in;
Forbad her first the house of Averill,
Then closed her access to the wealth-
ier farms,
Last from her own home-circle of the
poor
They barr'd her: yet she bore it: yet
her cheek
Kept color: wondrous! but, O mys-
tery!
What amulet drew her down to that
old oak,
So old, that twenty years before, a
part
Falling had let appear the brand of
John—
Once grovelike, each huge arm a tree,
but now
The broken base of a black tower, a
cave
Of touchwood, with a single flourish-
ing spray.
There the manorial lord too curiously
Raking in that millennial touchwood-
dust
Found for himself a bitter treasure-
trove;
Burst his own wyvern on the seal, and
read
Writhing a letter from his child, for
which
Came at the moment Leolin's emis-
sary,
A crippled lad, and coming turn'd to
fly,

But scared with threats of jail and
 halter gave
 To him that fluster'd his poor parish
 wits
 The letter which he brought, and
 swore besides
 'To play their go-between as hereto-
 fore
 Nor let them know themselves
 betray'd; and then,
 Soul-stricken at their kindness to him,
 went
 Hating his own lean heart and miser-
 able.

Thenceforward oft from out a despot
 dream
 The father panting woke, and oft, as
 dawn
 Aroused the black republic on his
 elms,
 Sweeping the frothfly from the fescue
 brush'd
 Thro' the dim meadow toward his
 treasure-trove,
 Seized it, took home, and to my lady,—
 who made
 A downward crescent of her minion
 mouth,
 Listless in all despondence,—read;
 and tore,
 As if the living passion symbol'd
 there
 Were living nerves to feel the rent;
 and burnt,
 Now chafing at his own great self
 defied,
 Now striking on huge stumbling-
 blocks of scorn
 In babyisms, and dear diminutives
 Scatter'd all over the vocabulary
 Of such a love as like a chidden
 child,
 After much wailing, hush'd itself at
 last
 Hopeless of answer: then tho' Aver-
 ill wrote
 And bad him with good heart sustain
 himself—
 All would be well—the lover heeded
 not,
 But passionately restless came and
 went,

And rustling once at night about the
 place,
 There by a keeper shot at, slightly
 hurt,
 Raging return'd: nor was it well for
 her
 Kept to the garden now, and grove of
 pines,
 Watch'd even there; and one was set
 to watch
 The watcher, and Sir Aylmer watch'd
 them all,
 Yet bitterer from his readings: once
 indeed,
 Warn'd with his wines, or taking
 pride in her,
 She look'd so sweet, he kiss'd her
 tenderly
 Not knowing what possess'd him:
 that one kiss
 Was Leolin's one strong rival upon
 earth;
 Seconded, for my lady follow'd suit,
 Seem'd hope's returning rose: and
 then ensued
 A Martin's summer of his faded love,
 Or ordeal by kindness; after this
 He seldom crost his child without a
 sneer;
 The mother flow'd in shallower acri-
 monies:
 Never one kindly smile, one kindly
 word:
 So that the gentle creature shut from
 all
 Her charitable use, and face to face
 With twenty months of silence, slowly
 lost
 Nor greatly cared to lose, her hold on
 life.
 Last, some low fever ranging round
 to spy
 The weakness of a people or a house,
 Like flies that haunt a wound, or deer,
 or men,
 Or almost all that is, hurting the
 hurt—
 Save Christ as we believe him—found
 the girl
 And flung her down upon a couch of
 fire,
 Where careless of the household faces
 near,

And crying upon the name of Leolin,
She, and with her the race of Aylmer,
past.

Star to star vibrates light: may
soul to soul
Strike thro' a finer element of her
own?
So,—from afar,—touch as at once? or
why
That night, that moment, when she
named his name,
Did the keen shriek 'Yes love, yes,
Edith, yes,'
Shrill, till the comrade of his cham-
bers woke,
And came upon him half-arisen from
sleep,
With a weird bright eye, sweating
and trembling,
His hair as it were crackling into
flames,
His body half flung forward in pur-
suit,
And his long arms stretch'd as to
grasp a flyer:
Nor knew he wherefore he had made
the cry;
And being much befooled and idioted
By the rough amity of the other,
sank
As into sleep again. The second
day,
My lady's Indian kinsman rushing in,
A breaker of the bitter news from
home,
Found a dead man, a letter edged
with death
Beside him, and the dagger which
himself
Gave Edith, redden'd with no bandit's
blood:
'From Edith' was engraven on the
blade.

Then Averill went and gazed upon
his death.
And when he came again, his flock
believed—
Beholding how the years which are
not Time's
Had blasted him—that many thou-
sand days

Were clipt by horror from his term of
life.

Yet the sad mother, for the second
death

Scarce touch'd her thro' that nearness
of the first,

And being used to find her pastor
texts,

Sent to the harrow'd brother, praying
him

To speak before the people of her
child,

And fixt the Sabbath. Darkly that
day rose:

Autumn's mock sunshine of the faded
woods

Was all the life of it; for hard on
these,

A breathless burthen of low-folded
heavens

Stifed and chill'd at once; but every
roof

Sent out a listener: many too had
known

Edith among the hamlets round, and
since

The parents' harshness and the hap-
less loves

And double death were widely mur-
mur'd, left

Their own gray tower, or plain-faced
tabernacle,

To hear him; all in mourning these,
and those

With blots of it about them, ribbon,
glove

Or kerchief; while the church,—one
night, except

For greenish glimmerings thro' the
lancets,—made

Still paler the pale head of him, who
tower'd

Above them, with his hopes in either
grave.

Long o'er his bent brows linger'd
Averill,

His face magnetic to the hand from
which

Livid he pluck'd it forth, and labor'd
thro'

His brief prayer-prelude, gave the
verse 'Behold,

Your house is left unto you desolate!
But lapsed into so long a pause again
As half amazed half frightened all his flock:
Then from his height and loneliness of grief
Bore down in flood, and dash'd his angry heart
Against the desolations of the world.

Never since our bad earth became one sea,
Which rolling o'er the palaces of the proud,
And all but those who knew the living God—
Eight that were left to make a purer world—
When since had flood, fire, earthquake, thunder, wrought
Such waste and havoc as the idolatries,
Which from the low light of mortality
Shot up their shadows to the Heaven of Heavens,
And worshipt their own darkness in the Highest?
'Gash thyself, priest, and honor thy brute Baäl,
And to thy worst self sacrifice thyself,
For with thy worst self hast thou clothed thy God.
Then came a Lord in no wise like to Baäl.
The babe shall lead the lion. Surely now
The wilderness shall blossom as the rose.
Crown thyself, worm, and worship thine own lusts!—
No coarse and blockish God of acreage
Stands at thy gate for thee to grovel to—
Thy God is far diffused in noble groves
And princely halls, and farms, and flowing lawns,
And heaps of living gold that daily grow,

And title-scrolls and gorgeous heraldries.
In such a shape dost thou behold thy God.
Thou wilt not gash thy flesh for him; for thine
Fares richly, in fine linen, not a hair
Ruffled upon the scarfskin, even while
The deathless ruler of thy dying house
Is wounded to the death that cannot die;
And tho' thou numberest with the followers
Of One who cried, "Leave all and follow me."
Thee therefore with His light about thy feet,
Thee with His message ringing in thine ears,
Thee shall thy brother man, the Lord from Heaven,
Born of a village girl, carpenter's son,
Wonderful, Prince of peace, the Mighty God,
Count the more base idolater of the two;
Crueller: as not passing thro' the fire
Bodies, but souls—thy children's—thro' the smoke.
The blight of low desires—darkening thine own
To thine own likeness; or if one of these,
Thy better born unhappily from thee,
Should, as by miracle, grow straight and fair—
Friends, I was bid to speak of such a one
By those who most have cause to sorrow for her—
Fairer than Rachel by the palmy well,
Fairer than Ruth among the fields of corn,
Fair as the Angel that said "Hail!" she seem'd,
Who entering fill'd the house with sudden light.
For so mine own was brighten'd: where indeed
The roof so lowly but that beam of Heaven

Dawn'd sometime thro' the doorway?
 whose the babe
 Too ragged to be fondled on her
 lap,
 Warm'd at her bosom? The poor
 child of shame
 The common care whom no one cared
 for, leapt
 To greet her, wasting his forgotten
 heart,
 As with the mother he had never
 known,
 In gambols; for her fresh and inno-
 cent eyes
 Had such a star of morning in their
 blue,
 That all neglected places of the field
 Broke into nature's music when they
 saw her.
 Low was her voice, but won myster-
 ious way
 Thro' the seal'd ear to which a louder
 one
 Was all but silence—free of aims her
 hand—
 The hand that robed your cottage-
 walls with flowers
 Has often toil'd to clothe your little
 ones;
 How often placed upon the sick man's
 brow
 Cool'd it, or laid his feverous pillow
 smooth!
 Had you one sorrow and she shared
 it not?
 One burthen and she would not lighten
 it?
 One spiritual doubt she did not
 soothe?
 Or when some heat of difference
 sparkled out,
 How sweetly would she glide between
 your wraths,
 And steal you from each other! for
 she walk'd
 Wearing the light yoke of that Lord
 of love,
 Who still'd the rolling wave of Gali-
 lee!
 And one—of him I was not bid to
 speak—
 Was always with her, whom you also
 knew.

Him too you loved, for he was worthy
 love.
 And these had been together from the
 first;
 They might have been together till
 the last.
 Friends, this frail bark of ours, when
 sorely tried
 May wreck itself without the pilot's
 guilt,
 Without the captain's knowledge:
 I hope with me.
 Whose shame is that, if he went hence
 with shame?
 Nor mine the fault, if losing both of
 these
 I cry to vacant chairs and widow'd
 walls,
 "My house is left unto me desolate."

While thus he spoke, his hearers
 wept; but some,
 Sons of the glebe, with other frowns
 than those
 That knit themselves for summer
 shadow, scowl'd
 At their great lord. He, when it
 seem'd he saw
 No pale sheet-lightnings from afar,
 but fork'd
 Of the near storm, and aiming at his
 head,
 Sat anger-charm'd from sorrow, sol-
 dier-like,
 Erect: but when the preacher's
 cadence flow'd
 Softening thro' all the gentle attri-
 butes
 Of his lost child, the wife, who
 watch'd his face,
 Paled at a sudden twitch of his iron
 mouth;
 And 'O pray God that he hold up'
 she thought
 'Or surely I shall shame myself and
 him.'

'Nor yours the blame—for who
 beside your hearths
 Can take her place—if echoing me you
 cry
 "Our house is left unto us deso-
 late?"

But thou, O thou that killest, hadst
 thou known,
 O thou that stonest, hadst thou under-
 stood
 The things belonging to thy peace and
 ours!
 Is there no prophet but the voice that
 calls
 Doom upon kings, or in the waste
 "Repent"?
 Is not our own child on the narrow
 way,
 Who down to those that saunter in the
 broad
 Cries "Come up hither," as a prophet
 to us?
 Is there no stoning save with flint
 and rock?
 Yes, as the dead we weep for tes-
 tify—
 No desolation but by sword and
 fire?
 Yes, as your moanings witness, and
 myself
 Am lonelier, darker, earthlier for my
 loss.
 Give me your prayers, for he is past
 your prayers,
 Not past the living fount of pity in
 Heaven.
 But I that thought myself long-suffer-
 ing, meek,
 Exceeding "poor in spirit"—how the
 words
 Have twisted back upon themselves,
 and mean
 Vileness, we are grown so proud—I
 wish'd my voice
 A rushing tempest of the wrath of
 God
 To 'blow these sacrifices thro' the
 world—
 Sent like the twelve-divided concu-
 bine
 To inflame the tribes: but there—out
 yonder—earth
 Lightens from her own central Hell—
 O there
 The red fruit of an old idolatry—
 The heads of chiefs and princes fall
 so fast,
 They cling together in the ghastly
 sack—

The land all shambles—naked mar-
 riages
 Flash from the bridge, and ever-
 murder'd France,
 By shores that darken with the gath-
 ering wolf,
 Runs in a river of blood to the sick
 sea.
 Is this a time to madden madness
 then?
 Was this a time for these to flaunt
 their pride?
 May Pharaoh's darkness, folds as
 dense as those
 Which hid the Holiest from the peo-
 ple's eyes
 Ere the great death, shroud this great
 sin from all!
 Doubtless our narrow world must
 canvass it:
 O rather pray for those and pity
 them,
 Who, thro' their own desire accom-
 plish'd, bring
 Their own gray hairs with sorrow to
 the grave—
 Who broke the bond which they
 desired to break,
 Which else had link'd their race with
 times to come—
 Who wove coarse webs to snare her
 purity,
 Grossly contriving their dear daugh-
 ter's good—
 Poor souls, and knew not what they
 did, but sat
 Ignorant, devising their own daugh-
 ter's death!
 May not that earthly chastisement
 suffice?
 Have not our love and reverence left
 them bare?
 Will not another take their heritage?
 Will there be children's laughter in
 their hall
 For ever and for ever, or one stone
 Left on another, or is it a light thing
 That I, their guest, their host, their
 ancient friend,
 I made by these the last of all my
 race,
 Must cry to these the last of theirs, as
 cried

Christ ere His agony to those that
 swore
 Not by the temple but the gold, and
 made
 Their own traditions God, and slew
 the Lord,
 And left their memories a world's
 curse—"Behold,
 Your house is left unto you deso-
 late"?"

Ended he had not, but she brook'd
 no more:
 Long since her heart had beat re-
 morselessly,
 Her cramped-up sorrow pain'd her, and
 a sense
 Of meanness in her unresisting life.
 Then their eyes vexed her; for on en-
 tering
 He had cast the curtains of their seat
 aside—
 Black velvet of the costliest—she her-
 self
 Had seen to that: fain had she closed
 them now,
 Yet dared not stir to do it, only
 near'd
 Her husband inch by inch, but when
 she laid,
 Wifelike, her hand in one of his, he
 veil'd
 His face with the other, and at once,
 as falls
 A creeper when the prop is broken,
 fell
 The woman shrieking at his feet, and
 swoon'd.
 Then her own people bore along the
 nave
 Her pendent hands, and narrow mea-
 gre face
 Seam'd with the shallow cares of fifty
 years:
 And her the Lord of all the landscape
 round
 Ev'n to its last horizon, and of all
 Who peer'd at him so keenly, follow'd
 out
 Tall and erect, but in the middle
 aisle
 Reel'd, as a footsore ox in crowded
 ways

Stumbling across the market to his
 death,
 Unpitied; for he groped as blind, and
 seem'd
 Always about to fall, grasping the
 pews
 And oaken finials till he touch'd the
 door;
 Yet to the lychgate, where his chariot
 stood,
 Strode from the porch, tall and erect
 again.

But nevermore did either pass the
 gate
 Save under pall with bearers. In one
 month,
 Thro' weary and yet ever wearier
 hours,
 The childless mother went to seek
 her child;
 And when he felt the silence of his
 house
 About him, and the change and not
 the change,
 And those fixt eyes of painted ances-
 tors
 Staring for ever from their gilded
 walls
 On him their last descendant, his own
 head
 Began to droop, to fall; the man be-
 came
 Imbecile; his one word was 'desolate';
 Dead for two years before his death
 was he;
 But when the second Christmas came,
 escaped
 His keepers, and the silence which he
 felt,
 To find a deeper in the narrow gloom
 By wife and child; nor wanted at his
 end
 The dark retinue reverencing death
 At golden thresholds; nor from ten-
 der hearts,
 And those who sorrow'd o'er a van-
 ish'd race,
 Pity, the violet on the tyrant's grave.
 Then the great Hall was wholly
 broken down,
 And the broad woodland parcell'd
 into farms;

And where the two contrived their
 daughter's good,
 Lies the hawk's cast, the mole has
 made his run,
 The hedgehog underneath the plan-
 tain bores,
 The rabbit fondles his own harmless
 face,
 The slow-worm creeps, and the thin
 weasel there
 Follows the mouse, and all is open
 field.

SEA DREAMS.

A CITY clerk, but gently born and
 bred;
 His wife, an unknown artist's orphan
 child—
 One babe was theirs, a Margaret,
 three years old:
 They, thinking that her clear german-
 der eye
 Droopt in the giant-factored city-
 gloom,
 Came, with a month's leave given
 them, to the sea:
 For which his gains were dock'd, how-
 ever small:
 Small were his gains, and hard his
 work; besides,
 Their slender household fortunes
 (for the man
 Had risk'd his little) like the little
 'thrif,
 Trembled in perilous places o'er a
 deep:
 And oft, when sitting all alone, his
 face
 Would darken, as he cursed his cred-
 ulousness,
 And that one unctuous mouth which
 lured him, rogue,
 To buy strange shares in some Peru-
 vian mine.
 Now seaward-bound for health they
 gain'd a coast,
 All sand and cliff and deep-inrunning
 cave,
 At close of day; slept, woke, and
 went the next,

The Sabbath, pious variers from the
 church,
 To chapel; where a heated pulpiter,
 Not preaching simple Christ to sim-
 ple men,
 Announced the coming doom, and ful-
 minated
 Against the scarlet woman and her
 creed;
 For sideways up he swung his arms,
 and shriek'd
 'Thus, thus with violence,' ev'n as if
 he held
 The Apocalyptic millstone, and him-
 self
 Were that great Angel; 'Thus with
 violence
 Shall Babylon be cast into the sea;
 Then comes the close.' The gentle-
 hearted wife
 Sat shuddering at the ruin of a world;
 He at his own: but when the wordy
 storm
 Had ended, forth they came and
 paced the shore,
 Ran in and out the long sea-framing
 caves,
 Drank the large air, and saw, but
 scarce believed
 (The sootflake of so many a summer
 still
 Clung to their fancies) that they saw,
 the sea.
 So now on sand they walk'd, and now
 on cliff,
 Lingering about the thymy promonto-
 ries,
 Till all the sails were darken'd in the
 west,
 And rosed in the east: then home-
 ward and to bed:
 Where she, who kept a tender Chris-
 tian hope,
 Haunting a holy text, and still to
 that
 Returning, as the bird returns, at
 night,
 'Let not the sun go down upon your
 wrath,'
 Said, 'Love, forgive him:' but he did
 not speak;
 And silenced by that silence lay the
 wife,

Remembering her dear Lord who
died for all,
And musing on the little lives of men,
And how they mar this little by their
feuds.

But while the two were sleeping, a
full tide
Rose with ground-swell, which, on the
foremost rocks
Touching, upjetted in spirits of wild
sea-smoke,
And scaled in sheets of wasteful foam,
and fell

In vast sea-cataracts—ever and anon
Dead claps of thunder from within
the cliffs
Heard thro' the living roar. At this
the babe,
Their Margaret cradled near them,
wail'd and woke
The mother, and the father suddenly
cried,
'A wreck, a wreck!' then turn'd, and
groaning said,

'Forgive! How many will say,
"forgive," and find
A sort of absolution in the sound
To hate a little longer! No; the sin
That neither God nor man can well
forgive,
Hypocrisy, I saw it in him at once.
Is it so true that second thoughts are
best?
Not first, and third, which are a riper
first?
Too ripe, too late! they come too late
for use.
Ah love, there surely lives in man and
beast
Something divine to warn them of
their foes:
And such a sense, when first I fronted
him,
Said, "Trust him not;" but after,
when I came
To know him more, I lost it, knew him
less;
Fought with what seem'd my own un-
charity;
Sat at his table; drank his costly
wines;

Made more and more allowance for
his talk;
Went further, fool! and trusted him
with all,
All my poor scrapings from a dozen
years
Of dust and deskwork: there is no
such mine,
None; but a gulf of ruin, swallowing
gold,
Not making. Ruin'd! ruin'd! the
sea roars
Ruin: a fearful night!'

'Not fearful; fair,'
Said the good wife, 'if every star in
heaven
Can make it fair: you do but hear the
tide.
Had you ill dreams?'

'O yes,' he said, 'I dream'd
Of such a tide swelling toward the
land,
And I from out the boundless outer
deep
Swept with it to the shore, and enter'd
one
Of those dark caves that run beneath
the cliffs.
I thought the motion of the boundless
deep
Bore thro' the cave, and I was heaved
upon it
In darkness: then I saw one lovely
star
Larger and larger. "What a world,"
I thought,
"To live in!" but in moving on I
found
Only the landward exit of the cave,
Bright with the sun upon the stream
beyond:
And near the light a giant woman sat,
All over earthy, like a piece of earth,
A pickaxe in her hand: then out I
slipt
Into a land all sun and blossom, trees
As high as heaven, and every bird
that sings
And here the night-light flickering in
my eyes
Awoke me.'

'That was then your dream,' she
said,
'Not sad, but sweet.'

'So sweet, I lay,' said he,
'And mused upon it, drifting up the
stream

In fancy, till I slept again, and pieced
The broken vision; for I dream'd that
still

The motion of the great deep bore me
on,

And that the woman walk'd upon the
brink:

I wonder'd at her strength, and ask'd
her of it:

"It came," she said, "by working in
the mines:"

O then to ask her of my shares, I
thought;

And ask'd; but not a word; she
shook her head.

And then the motion of the current
ceased,

And there was rolling thunder; and
we reach'd

A mountain, like a wall of burs and
thorns;

But she with her strong feet up the
steep hill

Trod out a path: I follow'd; and at
top

She pointed seaward: there a fleet of
glass,

That seem'd a fleet of jewels under
me,

Sailing along before a gloomy cloud
That not one moment ceased to

thunder, past

In sunshine: right across its track
there lay,

Down in the water, a long reef of
gold,

Or what seem'd gold: and I was glad
at first

To think that in our often-ransack'd
world

Still so much gold was left; and then
I fear'd

Lest the gay navy there should
splinter on it,

And fearing waved my arm to warn
them off;

An idle signal, for the brittle fleet
(I thought I could have died to save it)
near'd,

Touch'd, clink'd, and clash'd, and
vanish'd, and I woke,

I heard the clash so clearly. Now I
see

My dream was Life; the woman
honest Work;

And my poor venture but a fleet of
glass

Wreck'd on a reef of visionary gold.'

'Nay,' said the kindly wife to com-
fort him,

'You raised your arm, you tumbled
down and broke

The glass with little Margaret's medi-
cine in it;

And, breaking that, you made and
broke your dream:

A trifle makes a dream, a trifle breaks.'

'No trifle,' groan'd the husband;
'yesterday

I met him suddenly in the street, and
ask'd

That which I ask'd the woman in my
dream.

Like her, he shook his head. "Show
me the books!"

He dodged me with a long and loose
account.

"The books, the books!" but he, he
could not wait,

Bound on a matter he of life and
death:

When the great Books (see Daniel
seven and ten)

Were open'd, I should find he meant
me well;

And then began to bloat himself, and
ooze

All over with the fat affectionate
smile

That makes the widow lean. "My
dearest friend,

Have faith, have faith! We live by
faith," said he;

"And all things work together for the
good

Of those"—it makes me sick to quote
him—last

Gript my hand hard, and with God-
bless-you went.
I stood like one that had received a
blow :

I found a hard friend in his loose
accounts,
A loose one in the hard grip of his
hand,
A curse in his God-bless-you : then my
eyes
Pursued him down the street, and far
away,
Among the honest shoulders of the
crowd,
Read rascal in the motions of his
back,
And scoundrel in the supple-sliding
knee.'

'Was he so bound, poor soul?' said
the good wife;
'So are we all : but do not call him,
love,
Before you prove him, rogue, and
proved, forgive.
His gain is loss ; for he that wrongs
his friend
Wrongs himself more, and ever bears
about
A silent court of justice in his breast,
Himself the judge and jury, and him-
self
The prisoner at the bar, ever con-
demn'd :
And that drags down his life : then
comes what comes
Hereafter : and he meant, he said he
meant,
Perhaps he meant, or partly meant,
you well.'

"With all his conscience and one
eye askew"—
Love, let me quote these lines, that
you may learn
A man is likewise counsel for him-
self,
Too often, in that silent court of
yours—
"With all his conscience and one eye
askew,
So false, he partly took himself for
true ;

Whose pious talk, when most his
heart was dry,
Made wet the crafty crowsfoot round
his eye ;
Who, never naming God except for
gain,
So never took that useful name in
vain,
Made Him his catspaw and the Cross
his tool,
And Christ the bait to trap his dupe
and fool ;
Nor deeds of gift, but gifts of grace
he forged,
And snake-like slimed his victim ere
he gorged ;
And oft at Bible meetings, o'er the
rest
Arising, did his holy oily best,
Dropping the too rough H in Hell and
Heaven,
To spread the Word by which him-
self had thriven."
How like you this old satire ?'

'Nay,' she said,
'I loathe it : he had never kindly
heart,
Nor ever cared to better his own
kind,
Who first wrote satire, with no pity in
it.
But will you hear *my* dream, for I had
one
That altogether went to music ? Still
It awed me.'

Then she told it, having dream'd
Of that same coast.

—But round the North, a light,
A belt, it seem'd, of luminous vapor,
lay,
And ever in it a low musical note
Swell'd up and died ; and, as it
swell'd, a ridge
Of breaker issued from the belt, and
still
Grew with the growing note, and
when the note
Had reach'd a thunderous fulness, on
those cliffs

Broke, mixt with awful light (the
same as that
Living within the belt) whereby she
saw
That all those lines of cliffs were
cliffs no more,
But huge cathedral fronts of every
age,
Grave, florid, stern, as far as eye
could see,
One after one: and then the great
ridge drew,
Lessening to the lessening music,
back,
And past into the belt and swell'd
again
Slowly to music: ever when it broke
The statues, king or saint, or founder
fell;
Then from the gaps and chasms of
ruin left
Came men and women in dark clus-
ters round,
Some crying, 'Set them up! they
shall not fall!'
And others, 'Let them lie, for they
have fall'n.'
And still they strove and wrangled:
and she grieved
In her strange dream, she knew not
why, to find
Their wildest wailings never out of
tune
With that sweet note; and ever as
their shrieks
Ran highest up the gamut, that great
wave
Returning, while none mark'd it, on
the crowd
Broke, mixt with awful light, and
show'd their eyes
Glaring, and passionate looks, and
swept away
The men of flesh and blood, and men
of stone,
To the waste deeps together.

'Then I fixt
My wistful eyes on two fair images,
Both crown'd with stars and high
among the stars,—
The Virgin Mother standing with her
child

High up on one of those dark min-
ster-fronts—
Till she began to totter, and the child
Clung to the mother, and sent out a
cry
Which mixt with little Margaret's,
and I woke,
And my dream awed me:—well—but
what are dreams?
Yours came but from the breaking of
a glass,
And mine but from the crying of a
child.'

'Child? No!' said he, 'but this
tide's roar, and his,
Our Boanerges with his threats of
doom,
And loud-lung'd Antibabylonianisms
(Altho' I grant but little music there)
Went both to make your dream: but
if there were
A music harmonizing our wild cries,
Sphere-music such as that you
dream'd about,
Why, that would make our passions
far too like
The discords dear to the musician.
No—
One shriek of hate would jar all the
hymns of heaven:
True Devils with no ear, they howl in
tune
With nothing but the Devil!'

"True" indeed!
One of our town, but later by an hour
Here than ourselves, spoke with me
on the shore;
While you were running down the
sands, and made
The dimpled flounce of the sea-furbe-
low flap,
Good man, to please the child. She
brought strange news.
Why were you silent when I spoke
to-night?
I had set my heart on your forgiving
him
Before you knew. We *must* forgive
the dead.'

'Dead! who is dead?'

'The man your eye pursued.
A little after you had parted with
him,
He suddenly dropt dead of heart-
disease.'

'Dead? he? of heart-disease? what
heart had he
To die of? dead!'

'Ah, dearest, if there be
A devil in man, there is an angel too,
And if he did that wrong you charge
him with,
His angel broke his heart. But your
rough voice
(You spoke so loud) has roused the
child again.
'Sleep, little birdie, sleep! will she
not sleep
Without her "little birdie"? well
then, sleep,
And I will sing you "birdie."'

Saying this,
The woman half turn'd round from
him she loved,
Left him one hand, and reaching thro'
the night
Her other, found (for it was close be-
side)
And half-embraced the basket cradle-
head
With one soft arm, which, like the
pliant bough
That moving moves the nest and nest-
ling, sway'd
The cradle, while she sang this baby
song

What does little birdie say
In her nest at peep of day?
Let me fly, says little birdie,
Mother, let me fly away.
Birdie, rest a little longer,
Till the little wings are stronger.
So she rests a little longer,
Then she flies away.

What does little baby say,
In her bed at peep of day?
Baby says, like little birdie,
Let me rise and fly away.

Baby, sleep a little longer,
Till the little limbs are stronger.
If she sleeps a little longer,
Baby too shall fly away.

'She sleeps: let us too, let all evil,
sleep.
He also sleeps—another sleep than
ours.
He can do no more wrong: forgive
him, dear,
And I shall sleep the sounder!'

Then the man,
'His deeds yet live, the worst is yet
to come.
Yet let your sleep for this one night
be sound:
I do forgive him!'

'Thanks, my love,' she said,
'Your own will be the sweeter,' and
they slept.

LUCRETIVS.

LUCILIA, wedded to Lucretius, found
Her master cold; for when the morn-
ing flush
Of passion and the first embrace had
died
Between them, tho' he lov'd her none
the less,
Yet often when the woman heard his
foot
Return from paces in the field, and
ran
To greet him with a kiss, the master
took
Small notice, or austere; for—his
mind
Half buried in some weightier argu-
ment,
Or fancy-borne perhaps upon the rise
And long roll of the Hexameter—he
past
To turn and ponder those three hun-
dred scrolls
Left by the Teacher, whom he held
divine.
She brook'd it not; but wrathful, pet-
ulant,

Dreaming some rival, sought and
found a witch
Who brew'd the philtre which had
power, they said,
To lead an errant passion home again.
And this, at times, she mingled with
his drink,
And this destroy'd him; for the
wicked broth
Confused the chemic labor of the
blood,
And tickling the brute brain within
the man's
Made havoc among those tender
cells, and check'd
His power to shape: he loathed him-
self; and once
After a tempest woke upon a morn
That mock'd him with returning calm,
and cried:

'Storm in the night! for thrice I
heard the rain
Rushing; and once the flash of a
thunderbolt—
Methought I never saw so fierce a
fork—
Struck out the streaming mountain-
side, and show'd
A riotous confluence of watercourses
Blanching and billowing in a hollow
of it.
Where all but yester-eve was dusty-
dry.

'Storm, and what dreams, ye holy
Gods, what dreams!
For thrice I waken'd after dreams.
Perchance
We do but recollect the dreams that
come
Just ere the waking: terrible! for it
seem'd
A void was made in Nature; all her
bonds
Crack'd; and I saw the flaring atom-
streams
And torrents of her myriad universe,
Ruining along the illimitable inane,
Fly on to clash together again, and
make
Another and another frame of
things

For ever: that was mine, my dream, I
knew it—
Of and belonging to me, as the dog
With inward yelp and restless forefoot
plies
His function of the woodland: but
the next!
I thought that all the blood by Sylla
shed
Came, driving rainlike down again on
earth,
And where it dash'd the reddening
meadow, sprang
No dragon warriors from Cadmean
teeth,
For these I thought my dream would
show to me,
But girls, Hetairai, curious in their
art,
Hired animalisms, vile as those that
made
The mulberry-faced Dictator's orgies
worse
Than aught they fable of the quiet
Gods.
And hands they mixt, and yell'd and
round me drove
In narrowing circles till I yell'd again
Half-suffocated, and sprang up, and
saw—
Was it the first beam of my latest
day?

'Then, then, from utter gloom stood
out the breasts,
The breasts of Helen, and hoveringly
a sword
Now over and now under, now
direct,
Pointed itself to pierce, but sank down
shamed
At all that beauty; and as I stared, a
fire,
The fire that left a roofless Iliion,
Shot out of them, and scorch'd me
that I woke.

'Is this thy vengeance, holy Venus,
thine,
Because I would not one of thine own
doves,
Not ev'n a rose, were offer'd to thee?
thine,

Forgetful how my rich procœmion
makes
Thy glory fly along the Italian field,
In lays that will outlast thy Deity?

'Deity? nay, thy worshippers. My
tongue
Trips, or I speak profanely. Which
of these
Angers thee most, or angers thee at
all?
Not if thou be'st of those who, far
aloof
From envy, hate and pity, and spite
and scorn,
Live the great life which all our great-
est fain
Would follow, center'd in eternal calm.

'Nay, if thou canst, O Goddess,
like ourselves
Touch, and be touch'd, then would I
cry to thee
To kiss thy Mavors, roll thy tender
arms
Round him, and keep him from the
lust of blood
That makes a steaming slaughter-
house of Rome.

'Ay, but I meant not thee; I meant
not her,
Whom all the pines of Ida shook to
see
Slide from that quiet heaven of hers,
and tempt
The Trojan, while his neat-herds were
abroad;
Nor her that o'er her wounded hunter
wept
Her Deity false in human-anxious
tears;
Nor whom her beardless apple-arbiter,
Decided fairest. Rather, O ye Gods,
Poet-like, as the great Sicilian called
Calliope to grace his golden verse—
Ay, and this Kypris also—did I take
That popular name of thine to shadow
forth
The all-generating powers and genial
heat
Of Nature, when she strikes thro' the
thick blood

Of cattle, and light is large, and lambs
are glad
Nosing the mother's udder, and the
bird
Makes his heart voice amid the blaze
of flowers:
Which things appear the work of
mighty Gods.

'The Gods! and if I go *my* work is
left
Unfinish'd—if I go. The Gods, who
haunt
The lucid interspace of world and
world,
Where never creeps a cloud, or moves
a wind,
Nor ever falls the least white star of
snow,
Nor ever lowest roll of thunder moans,
Nor sound of human sorrow mounts
to mar
Their sacred everlasting calm! and
such,
Not all so fine, nor so divine a calm,
Not such, nor all unlike it, man may
gain
Letting his own life go. The Gods,
the Gods!
If all be atoms, how then should the
Gods
Being atomic not be dissoluble,
Not follow the great law? My master
held
That Gods there are, for all men so
believe.
I prest my footsteps into his, and
meant
Surely to lead my Memmius in a train
Of flowery clauses onward to the proof
That Gods there are, and deathless.
Meant? I meant?
I have forgotten what I meant: my
mind
Stumbles, and all my faculties are
lamed.

'Look where another of our Gods,
the Sun,
Apollo, Delius, or of older use
All-seeing Hyperion—what you will—
Has mounted yonder; since he never
sware,

Except his wrath were wreak'd on
wretched man,
That he would only shine among the
dead
Hereafter; tales! for never yet on
earth
Could dead flesh creep, or bits of
roasting ox
Moan round the spit—nor knows he
what he sees;
King of the East altho' he seem, and
girt
With song and flame and fragrance,
slowly lifts
His golden feet on those empurpled
stairs
That climb into the windy halls of
heaven:
And here he glances on an eye new-
born,
And gets for greeting but a wail of
pain;
And here he stays upon a freezing orb
That fain would gaze upon him to the
last;
And here upon a yellow eyelid fall'n
And closed by those who mourn a
friend in vain,
Not thankful that his troubles are no
more.
And me, altho' his fire is on my face
Blinding, he sees not, nor at all can
tell
Whether I mean this day to end my-
self,
Or lend an ear to Plato where he
says,
That men like soldiers may not quit
the post
Allotted by the Gods: but he that
holds
The Gods are careless, wherefore
need he care
Greatly for them, nor rather plunge
at once,
Being troubled, wholly out of sight,
and sink
Past earthquake—ay, and gout and
stone, that break
Body toward death, and palsy, death-
in-life,
And wretched age—and worst disease
of all,

These prodigies of myriad naked-
nesses,
And twisted shapes of lust, unspeak-
able,
Abominable, strangers at my hearth
Not welcome, harpies miring every
dish,
The phantom husks of something
foully done,
And fleeting thro' the boundless uni-
verse,
And blasting the long quiet of my
breast
With animal heat and dire insanity?

'How should the mind, except it
loved them, clasp
These idols to herself? or do they
fly
Now thinner, and now thicker, like
the flakes
In a fall of snow, and so press in, per-
force
Of multitude, as crowds that in an
hour
Of civic tumult jam the doors, and
bear
The keepers down, and throng, their
rags and they
The basest, far into that council-hall
Where sit the best and stateliest of
the land?

'Can I not fling this horror off me
again,
Seeing with how great ease Nature
can smile,
Balmier and nobler from her bath of
storm,
At random ravage? and how easily
The mountain there has cast his
cloudy slough,
Now towering o'er him in serenest
air,
A mountain o'er a mountain,—ay, and
within
All hollow as the hopes and fears of
men?

'But who was he, that in the garden
snared
Picus and Faunus, rustic Gods? a
tale

To laugh at—more to laugh at in myself—

For look ! what is it ? there ? yon arbutus

Totters ; a noiseless riot underneath
Strikes through the wood, sets all the
tops quivering—

The mountain quickens into Nymph
and Faun ;

And here an Oread—how the sun delights

To glance and shift about her slippery
sides,

And rosy knees and supple rounded-
ness,

And budded bosom-peaks—who this
way runs

Before the rest—A satyr, a satyr, see,
Follows ; but him I proved impossi-
ble ;

Twy-natured is no nature : yet he
draws

Nearer and nearer, and I scan him
now

Beastlier than any phantom of his
kind

That ever butted his rough brother-
brute

For lust or lusty blood or provender :
I hate, abhor, spit, sicken at him ; and
she

Loathes him as well ; such a precipi-
tate heel,

Fledged as it were with Mercury's
ankle-wing,

Whirls her to me : but will she fling
herself,

Shameless upon me ? Catch her,
goat-foot : nay,

Hide, hide them, million-myrtled wil-
derness,

And cavern-shadowing laurels, hide !
do I wish—

What ?—that the bush were leafless ?
or to whelm

All of them in one massacre ? O ye
Gods,

I know you careless, yet, behold, to
you

From childly wont and ancient use I
call—

I know I lived securely as your-
selves—

No lewdness, narrowing envy, mon-
key-spite,

No madness of ambition, avarice,
none :

No larger feast than under plane or
pine

With neighbors laid along the grass,
to take

Only such cups as left us friendly-
warm,

Affirming each his own philosophy—
Nothing to mar the sober majesties

Of settled, sweet, Epicurean life.
But now it seems some unseen mon-
ster lays

His vast and filthy hands upon my
will,

Wrenching it backward into his ; and
spoils

My bliss in being ; and it was not
great ;

For save when shutting reasons up in
rhythm,

Or Heliconian honey in living words,
To make a truth less harsh, I often
grew

Tired of so much within our little
life,

Or of so little in our little life—
Poor little life that toddles half an
hour

Crown'd with a flower or two, and
there an end—

And since the nobler pleasure seems
to fade,

Why should I, beastlike as I find my-
self,

Not manlike end myself ?—our privi-
lege—

What beast has heart to do it ? And
what man,

What Roman would be dragg'd in
triumph thus ?

Not I ; not he, who bears one name
with her

Whose death-blow struck the dateless
doom of kings,

When, brooking not the Tarquin in
her veins,

She made her blood in sight of Colla-
tine

And all his peers, flushing the guilt-
less air,

Spout from the maiden fountain in
her heart.
And from it sprang the Common-
wealth, which breaks
As I am breaking now!

‘And therefore now
Let her, that is the womb and tomb
of all,
Great Nature, take, and forcing far
apart
Those blind beginnings that have
made me man,
Dash them anew together at her will
Thro’ all her cycles—into man once
more,
Or beast or bird or fish, or opulent
flower:
But till this cosmic order everywhere
Shatter’d into one earthquake in one
day
Cracks all to pieces,—and that hour
perhaps
Is not so far when momentary man
Shall seem no more a something to
himself,
But he, his hopes and hates, his
homes and fanes,
And even his bones long laid within
the grave,
The very sides of the grave itself
shall pass,
Vanishing, atom and void, atom and
void,
Into the unseen for ever,—till that
hour,
My golden work in which I told a
truth
That stays the rolling Ixionian wheel,

And numbs the Fury’s ringlet-snake,
and plucks
The mortal soul from out immortal
hell,
Shall stand: ay, surely: then it fails
at last
And perishes as I must; for O Thou,
Passionless bride, divine Tranquillity,
Yearn’d after by the wisest of the
wise,
Who fail to find thee, being as thou
art
Without one pleasure and without
one pain,
Howbeit I know thou surely must be
mine
Or soon or late, yet out of season,
thus
I woo thee roughly, for thou carest
not
How roughly men may woo thee so
they win—
Thus—thus: the soul flies out and
dies in the air.’

With that he drove the knife into
his side:
She heard him raging, heard him fall;
ran in,
Beat breast, tore hair, cried out upon
herself
As having fail’d in duty to him,
shriek’d
That she but meant to win him back,
fell on him,
Clasp’d, kiss’d him, wail’d: he an-
swer’d, ‘Care not thou!
Thy duty? What is duty? Fare thee
well!’

MAUD; A MONODRAMA.

PART I.

I.

I.

I HATE the dreadful hollow behind the little wood,
Its lips in the field above are dabbled with blood-red heath,
The red-ribb’d ledges drip with a silent horror of blood,
And Echo there, whatever is ask’d her, answers ‘Death.’

II.

For there in the ghastly pit long since a body was found,
His who had given me life—O father! O God! was it well?—
Mangled, and flatten'd, and crush'd, and dinto into the ground:
There yet lies the rock that fell with him when he fell.

III.

Did he fling himself down? who knows? for a vast speculation had fail'd,
And ever he mutter'd and madden'd, and ever wann'd with despair,
And out he walk'd when the wind like a broken worldling wail'd,
And the flying gold of the ruin'd woodlands drove thro' the air.

IV.

I remember the time, for the roots of my hair were stirr'd
By a shuffled step, by a dead weight trail'd, by a whisper'd fright,
And my pulses closed their gates with a shock on my heart as I heard
The shrill-edged shriek of a mother divide the shuddering night.

V.

Villainy somewhere! whose? One says, we are villains all.
Not he: his honest fame should at least by me be maintained:
But that old man, now lord of the broad estate and the Hall,
Dropt off gorged from a scheme that had left us flaccid and drain'd.

VI.

Why do they prate of the blessings of Peace? we have made them a curse,
Pickpockets, each hand lusting for all that is not its own;
And lust of gain, in the spirit of Cain, is it better or worse
Than the heart of the citizen hissing in war on his own hearthstone?

VII.

But these are the days of advance, the works of the men of mind,
When who but a fool would have faith in a tradesman's ware or his word?
Is it peace or war? Civil war, as I think, and that of a kind
The viler, as underhand, not openly bearing the sword.

VIII.

Sooner or later I too may passively take the print
Of the golden age—why not? I have neither hope nor trust;
May make my heart as a millstone, set my face as a flint,
Cheat and be cheated, and die: who knows? we are ashes and dust.

IX.

Peace sitting under her olive, and slurring the days gone by,
When the poor are hovell'd and hustled together, each sex, like swine,
When only the ledger lives, and when only not all men lie;
Peace in her vineyard—yes!—but a company forges the wine.

X.

And the vitriol madness flushes up in the ruffian's head,
Till the filthy by-lane rings to the yell of the trampled wife,
And chalk and alum and plaster are sold to the poor for bread,
And the spirit of murder works in the very means of life,

XI.

And Sleep must lie down arm'd, for the villainous centre-bits
Grind on the wakeful ear in the hush of the moonless nights,
While another is cheating the sick of a few last gasps, as he sits
To pestle a poison'd poison behind his crimson lights.

XII.

When a Mammonite mother kills her babe for a burial fee,
And Timour-Mammon grins on a pile of children's bones,
Is it peace or war? better, war! loud war by land and by sea,
War with a thousand battles, and shaking a hundred thrones.

XIII.

For I trust if an enemy's fleet came yonder round by the hill,
And the rushing battle-bolt sang from the three-decker out of the foam,
That the smooth-faced snubnosed rogue would leap from his counter and till,
And strike, if he could, were it but with his cheating yardwand, home.—

XIV.

What! am I raging alone as my father raged in his mood?
Must I too creep to the hollow and dash myself down and die
Rather than hold by the law that I made, nevermore to brood
On a horror of shatter'd limbs and a wretched swindler's lie?

XV.

Would there be sorrow for *me*? there was *love* in the passionate shriek,
Love for the silent thing that had made false haste to the grave—
Wrapt in a cloak, as I saw him, and thought he would rise and speak
And rave at the lie and the liar, ah God, as he used to rave.

XVI.

I am sick of the Hall and the hill, I am sick of the moor and the main.
Why should I stay? can a sweeter chance ever come to me here?
O, having the nerves of motion as well as the nerves of pain,
Were it not wise if I fled from the place and the pit and the fear?

XVII.

Workmen up at the Hall!—they are coming back from abroad;
The dark old place will be gilt by the touch of a millionaire:
I have heard, I know not whence, of the singular beauty of Maud;
I play'd with the girl when a child; she promised then to be fair.

XVIII.

Maud with her venturous climbings and tumbles and childish escapes,
 Maud the delight of the village, the ringing joy of the Hall,
 Maud with her sweet purse-mouth when my father dangled the grapes,
 Maud the beloved of my mother, the moon-faced darling of all,—

XIX.

What is she now? My dreams are bad. She may bring me a curse.
 No, there is fatter game on the moor; she will let me alone.
 Thanks, for the fiend best knows whether woman or man be the worse.
 I will bury myself in myself, and the Devil may pipe to his own.

II.

Long have I sigh'd for a calm: God grant I may find it at last!
 It will never be broken by Maud, she has neither savor nor salt,
 But a cold and clear-cut face, as I found when her carriage past,
 Perfectly beautiful: let it be granted her: where is the fault?
 All that I saw (for her eyes were downcast, not to be seen)
 Faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null,
 Dead perfection, no more; nothing more, if it had not been
 For a chance of travel, a paleness, an hour's defect of the rose,
 Or an underlip, you may call it a little too ripe, too full,
 Or the least little delicate aquiline curve in a sensitive nose,
 From which I escaped heart-free, with the least little touch of spleen.

III.

Cold and clear-cut face, why come you so cruelly meek,
 Breaking a slumber in which all spleenful folly was drown'd,
 Pale with the golden beam of an eyelash dead on the cheek,
 Passionless, pale, cold face, star-sweet on a gloom profound;
 Womanlike, taking revenge too deep for a transient wrong
 Done but in thought to your beauty, and ever as pale as before
 Growing and fading and growing upon me without a sound,
 Luminous, gemlike, ghostlike, deathlike, half the night long
 Growing and fading and growing, till I could bear it no more,
 But arose, and all by myself in my own dark garden ground,
 Listening now to the tide in its broad-flung shipwrecking roar,
 Now to the scream of a madden'd beach dragg'd down by the wave,
 Walk'd in a wintry wind by a ghastly glimmer, and found
 The shining daffodil dead, and Orion low in his grave.

IV.

I.

A million emeralds break from the ruby-budded lime
 In the little grove where I sit—ah, wherefore cannot I be
 Like things of the season gay, like the bountiful season birds,
 When the far-off sail is blown by the breeze of a softer clime.



"THOU ART MATED WITH A CLOWN."—Page 79.



Half-lost in the liquid azure bloom of a crescent of sea,
The silent sapphire-spangled marriage ring of the land?

II.

Below me, there, is the village, and looks how quiet and small!
And yet bubbles o'er like a city, with gossip, scandal, and spite;
And Jack on his ale-house bench has as many lies as a Czar;
And here on the landward side, by a red rock, glimmers the Hall;
And up in the high Hall-garden I see her pass like a light;
But sorrow seize me if ever that light be my leading star!

III.

When have I bow'd to her father, the wrinkled head of the race?
I met her to-day with her brother, but not to her brother I bow'd:
I bow'd to his lady-sister as she rode by on the moor;
But the fire of a foolish pride flash'd over her beautiful face.
O child, you wrong your beauty, believe it, in being so proud;
Your father has wealth well-gotten, and I am nameless and poor.

IV.

I keep but a man and a maid, ever ready to slander and steal;
I know it, and smile a hard-set smile, like a stoic, or like
A wiser epicurean, and let the world have its way:
For nature is one with rapine, a harm no preacher can heal;
The Mayfly is torn by the swallow, the sparrow spear'd by the shrike,
And the whole little wood where I sit is a world of plunder and prey.

V.

(We are puppets, Man in his pride, and Beauty fair in her flower;
Do we move ourselves, or are moved by an unseen hand at a game
That pushes us off from the board, and others ever succeed?
Ah yet, we cannot be kind to each other here for an hour;
We whisper, and hint, and chuckle, and grin at a brother's shame;
However we brave it out, we men are a little breed.)

VI.

A monstrous eft was of old the Lord and Master of Earth,
For him did his high sun flame, and his river billowing ran,
And he felt himself in his force to be Nature's crowning race.
As nine months go to the shaping an infant ripe for his birth,
So many a million of ages have gone to the making of man:
He now is first, but is he the last? is he not too base?

VII.

The man of science himself is fonder of glory, and vain,
An eye well-practised in nature, a spirit bounded and poor;
The passionate heart of the poet is whirl'd into folly and vice.
I would not marvel at either, but keep a temperate brain;
For not to desire or admire, if a man could learn it, were more
Than to walk all day like the sultan of old in a garden of spice.

VIII.

For the drift of the Maker is dark, an Isis hid by the veil.
 Who knows the ways of the world, how God will bring them about?
 Our planet is one, the suns are many, the world is wide.
 Shall I weep if a Poland fall? shall I shriek if a Hungary fail?
 Or an infant civilization be ruled with rod or with knout?
 I have not made the world, and He that made it will guide.

IX.

Be mine a philosopher's life in the quiet woodland ways,
 Where if I cannot be gay let a passionless peace be my lot,
 Far-off from the clamor of liars belied in the hubbub of lies;
 From the long-neck'd geese of the world that are ever hissing dispraise
 Because their natures are little, and, whether he heed it or not,
 Where each man walks with his head in a cloud of poisonous flies.

X.

And most of all would I flee from the cruel madness of love,
 The honey of poison-flowers and all the measureless ill.
 Ah Maud, you milkwhite fawn, you are all unmeet for a wife.
 Your mother is mute in her grave as her image in marble above;
 Your father is ever in London, you wander about at your will:
 You have but fed on the roses and lain in the lilies of life.

V.

I.

A voice by the cedar tree
 In the meadow under the Hall!
 She is singing an air that is known to
 me,

A passionate ballad gallant and gay,
 A martial song like a trumpet's call!
 Singing alone in the morning of life,
 In the happy morning of life and of
 May,

Singing of men that in battle array,
 Ready in heart and ready in hand,
 March with banner and bugle and
 fife
 To the death, for their native land.

II.

Maud with her exquisite face,
 And wild voice pealing up to the sunny
 sky,
 And feet like sunny gems on an Eng-
 lish green,
 Maud in the light of her youth and her
 grace,

Singing of Death, and of Honor that
 cannot die,
 Till I well could weep for a time so
 sordid and mean,
 And myself so languid and base."

III.

Silence, beautiful voice!
 Be still, for you only trouble the mind
 With a joy in which I cannot rejoice,
 A glory I shall not find.
 Still! I will hear you no more,
 For your sweetness hardly leaves me
 a choice
 But to move to the meadow and fall
 before
 Her feet on the meadow grass, and
 adore,
 Not her, who is neither courtly nor kind,
 Not her, not her, but a voice.

VI.

I.

Morning arises stormy and pale,
 No sun, but a wannish glare

In fold upon fold of hueless cloud,
And the budded peaks of the wood are
bow'd
Caught and cuff'd by the gale :
I had fancied it would be fair.

II.

Whom but Maud should I meet
Last night, when the sunset burn'd
On the blossom'd gable-ends
At the head of the village street,
Whom but Maud should I meet ?
And she touch'd my hand with a smile
so sweet,
She made me divine amends
For a courtesy not return'd.

III.

And thus a delicate spark
Of glowing and growing light
Thro' the livelong hours of the dark
Kept itself warm in the heart of my
dreams,
Ready to burst in a color'd flame ;
Till at last when the morning came
In a cloud, it faded, and seems
But an ashen-gray delight.

IV.

What if with her sunny hair,
And smile as sunny as cold,
She meant to weave me a snare
Of some coquettish deceit,
Cleopatra-like as of old
To entangle me when we met,
To have her lion roll in a silken net
And fawn at a victor's feet.

V.

Ah, what shall I be at fifty
Should Nature keep me alive,
If I find the world so bitter
When I am but twenty-five ?
Yet, if she were not a cheat,
If Maud were all that she seem'd,
And her smile were all that I dream'd,
Then the world were not so bitter
But a smile could make it sweet,

VI.

What if tho' her eye seem'd full
Of a kind intent to me,
What if that dandy-despot, he,
That jewell'd mass of millinery,
That oil'd and curl'd Assyrian Bull
Smelling of musk and of insolence,
Her brother, from whom I keep aloof,
Who wants the finer politic sense
To mask, tho' but in his own behoof,
With a glassy smile his brutal scorn—
What if he had told her yesternorn
How prettily for his own sweet sake
A face of tenderness might be feign'd,
And a moist mirage in desert eyes,
That so, when the rotten hustings
shake

In another month to his brazen lies,
A wretched vote may be gain'd.

VII.

For a raven ever croaks, at my side,
Keep watch and ward, keep watch
and ward,
Or thou wilt prove their tool.
Yea, too, myself from myself I guard,
For often a man's own angry pride
Is cap and bells for a fool.

VIII.

Perhaps the smile and tender tone
Came out of her pitying womanhood,
For am I not, am I not, here alone
So many a summer since she died,
My mother, who was so gentle and
good ?
Living alone in an empty house,
Here half-hid in the gleaming wood,
Where I hear the dead at midday
moan,
And the shrieking rush of the wainscot
mouse,
And my own sad name in corners
cried,
When the shiver of dancing leaves is
thrown
About its echoing chambers wide,
Till a morbid hate and horror have
grown
Of a world in which I have hardly
mixin,

And a morbid eating lichen fixt
On a heart half-torn'd to stone.

IX.

O heart of stone, are you flesh, and
caught
By that you swore to withstan ?
For what was it else within me wrought
But, I fear, the new strong wine of
love,
That made my tongue so stammer and
trip
When I saw the treasured splendor,
her hand,
Come sliding out of her sacred glove,
And the sunlight broke from her lip ?

X.

I have play'd with her when a child ;
She remembers it now we meet.
Ah well, well, well, I *may* be beguiled
By some coquettish deceit.
Yet, if she were not a cheat,
If Maud were all that she seem'd,
And her smile had all that I dream'd,
Then the world were not so bitter
But a smile could make it sweet.

VII.

I.

Did I hear it half in a doze
Long since, I know not where ?
Did I dream it an hour ago,
When asleep in this arm-chair ?

II.

Men were drinking together,
Drinking and talking of me ;
' Well, if it prove a girl, the boy
Will have plenty : so let it be.'

III.

Is it an echo of something
Read with a boy's delight,
Viziers nodding together
In some Arabian night ?

IV.

Strange, that I hear two men,
Somewhere, talking of me ;

' Well, if it prove a girl, my boy
Will have plenty : so let it be.'

VIII.

She came to the village church,
And sat by a pillar alone ;
An angel watching an orn
Wept over her, carved in stone ;
And once, but once, she lifted her
eyes,
And suddenly, sweetly, strangely
blush'd
To find they were met by my own ;
And suddenly, sweetly, my heart beat
stronger
And thicker, until I heard no longer
The snowy-banded, dilettante,
Delicate-handed priest intone ;
And thought, is it pride, and mused
and sigh'd
' No surely, now it cannot be pride.'

IX.

I was walking a mile,
More than a mile from the shore,
The sun look'd out with a smile
Betwixt the cloud and the moor
And riding at set of day
Over the dark moor land,
Rapidly riding far away,
She waved to me with her hand.
There were two at her side,
Something flash'd in the sun,
Down by the hill I saw them ride,
In a moment they were gone :
Like a sudden spark
Struck vainly in the night,
Then returns the dark
With no more hope of light.

X.

I.

Sick, am I sick of a jealous dread ?
Was not one of the two at her side
This new-made lord, whose splendor
plucks
The slavish hat from the villager's
head ?
Whose old grandfather has lately
died,
Gone to a blacker pit, for whom

Grimy nakedness dragging his trucks
 And laying his trams in a poison'd
 gloom
 Wrought, till he crept from a gutted
 mine
 Master of half a servile shire,
 And left his coal all turn'd into gold
 To a grandson, first of his noble line,
 Rich in the grace all women desire,
 Strong in the power that all men
 adore,
 And simper and set their voices lower,
 And soften as if to a girl, and hold
 Awe-stricken breaths at a work di-
 vine,
 Seeing his gewgaw castle shine,
 New as his title, built last year,
 There amid perky larches and pine,
 And over the sullen-purple moor
 (Look at it) pricking a cockney ear.

II.

What, has he found my jewel out?
 For one of the two that rode at her
 side
 Bound for the Hall, I am sure was
 he:
 Bound for the Hall, and I think for a
 bride.
 Blithe would her brother's acceptance
 be.
 Maud could be gracious too, no doubt
 To a lord, a captain, a padded shape,
 A bought commission, a waxen face,
 A rabbit mouth that is ever agape—
 Bought? what is it he cannot buy?
 And therefore splenetic, personal,
 base,
 A wounded thing with a rancorous
 cry,
 At war with myself and a wretched
 race,
 Sick, sick to the heart of life, am I.

III.

Last week came one to the county
 town,
 To preach our poor little army down,
 And play the game of the despot
 kings,
 Tho' the state has done it and thrice
 as well:

This broad-brim'd hawker of holy
 things,
 Whose ear is cram'd with his cotton,
 and rings
 Even in dreams to the chink of his
 pence,
 This huckster put down war! can he
 tell
 Whether war be a cause or a conse-
 quence?
 Put down the passions that make
 earth Hell!
 Down with ambition, avarice, pride,
 Jealousy, down! cut off from the
 mind
 The bitter springs of anger and fear;
 Down too, down at your own fireside,
 With the evil tongue and the evil ear,
 For each is at war with mankind.

IV.

I wish I could hear again
 The chivalrous battle-song
 That she warbled alone in her joy!
 I might persuade myself then
 She would not do herself this great
 wrong,
 To take a wanton dissolute boy
 For a man and leader of men.

V.

Ah God, for a man with heart, head,
 hand,
 Like some of the simple great ones
 gone
 For ever and ever by,
 One still strong man in a blatant land,
 Whatever they call him, what care I,
 Aristocrat, democrat, autocrat—one
 Who can rule and dare not lie.

VI.

And ah for a man to arise in me,
 That the man I am may cease to be!

XI.

I.

O let the solid ground
 Not fail beneath my feet
 Before my life has found

What some have found so sweet;
Then let come what come may,
What matter if I go mad,
I shall have had my day.

II.

Let the sweet heavens endure,
Not close and darken above me
Before I am quite quite sure
That there is one to love me;
Then let come what come may
To a life that has been so sad,
I shall have had my day.

XII.

I.

Birds in the high Hall-garden
When twilight was falling,
Maud, Maud, Maud, Maud,
They were crying and calling.

II.

Where was Maud? in our wood;
And I, who else, was with her,
Gathering woodland lilies,
Myriads blow together.

III.

Birds in our wood sang
Ringing thro' the valleys,
Maud is here, here, here
In among the lilies.

IV.

I kiss'd her slender hand,
She took the kiss sedately;
Maud is not seventeen,
But she is tall and stately.

V.

I to cry out on pride
Who have won her favor!
O Maud were sure of Heaven
If lowliness could save her.

VI.

I know the way she went
Home with her maiden posy,

For her feet have touch'd the meadows
And left the daisies rosy.

VII.

Birds in the high Hall-garden
Were crying and calling to her,
Where is Maud, Maud, Maud?
One is come to woo her.

VIII.

Look, a horse at the door,
And little King Charley snarling,
Go back, my lord, across the moor,
You are not her darling.

XIII.

I.

Scorn'd, to be scorn'd by one that I
scorn,

Is that a matter to make me fret?
That a calamity hard to be borne?
Well, he may live to hate me yet.
Fool that I am to be vex'd with his
pride!

I past him, I was crossing his lands;
He stood on the path a little aside;
His face, as I grant, in spite of spite,
Has a broad-blown comeliness, red
and white,

And six feet two, as I think, he
stands;

But his essences turn'd the live air
sick,

And barbarous opulence jewel-thick,
Sunn'd itself on his breast and his
hands.

II.

Who shall call me ungentle, unfair,
I long'd so heartily then and there
To give him the grasp of fellowship;
But while I past he was humming an
air,

Stopt, and then with a riding whip
Leisurely tapping a glossy boot,
And curving a contumelious lip,
Gorgonized me from head to foot
With a stony British stare.

III.

Why sits he here in his father's chair?
That old man never comes to his
place:

Shall I believe him ashamed to be
seen?

For only once, in the village street,
Last year, I caught a glimpse of his
face,

A gray old wolf and a lean.

Scarcely, now, would I call him a
cheat;

For then, perhaps, as a child of de-
ceit,

She might by a true descent be un-
true;

And Maud is as true as Maud is
sweet:

Tho' I fancy her sweetness only due
To the sweeter blood by the other
side;

Her mother has been a thing com-
plete,

However she came to be so allied.

And fair without, faithful within,

Maud to him is nothing akin:

Some peculiar mystic grace

Made her only the child of her
mother,

And heap'd the whole inherited sin

On that huge scapegoat of the race,

All, all upon the brother.

IV.

Peace, angry spirit, and let him be!
Has not his sister smiled on me?

XIV.

I.

Maud has a garden of roses

And lilies fair on a lawn;

There she walks in her state

And tends upon bed and bower,

And thither I climb'd at dawn

And stood by her garden-gate;

A lion ramps at the top,

He is clapt by a passion-flower.

II.

Maud's own little oak-room

(Which Maud, like a precious stone

Set in the heart of the carven gloom,
Lights with herself, when alone
She sits by her music and books
And her brother lingers late
With a roystering company) looks
Upon Maud's own garden-gate:
And I thought as I stood, if a hand,
as white

As ocean-foam in the moon, were laid
On the hasp of the window, and my
Delight

I had a sudden desire, like a glorious
ghost, to glide,

Like a beam of the seventh Heaven,
down to my side,

There were but a step to be made.

III.

The fancy flatter'd my mind,

And again seem'd overbold;

Now I thought that she cared for me,

Now I thought she was kind

Only because she was cold.

IV.

I heard no sound where I stood

But the rivulet on from the lawn

Running down to my own dark wood;

Or the voice of the long sea-wave as
it swell'd

Now and then in the dim-gray dawn;

But I look'd, and round, all round the
house I beheld

The death-white curtain drawn;

Felt a horror over me creep,

Prickle my skin and catch my breath,

Knew that the death-white curtain
meant but sleep,

Yet I shudder'd and thought like a
fool of the sleep of death.

XV.

So dark a mind within me dwells,

And I make myself such evil
cheer,

That if I be dear to some one else,

Then some one else may have much
to fear;

But if I be dear to some one else,

Then I should be to myself more
dear.

Shall I not take care of all that I
think,
Yea ev'n of wretched meat and drink,
If I be dear,
If I be dear to some one else.

XVI.

I.

This lump of earth has left his estate
The lighter by the loss of his weight;
And so that he find what he went to
seek,
And fulsome Pleasure clog him, and
drown
His heart in the gross mud-honey of
town,
He may stay for a year who has gone
for a week:
But this is the day when I must
speak,
And I see my Oread coming down,
O this is the day!
O beautiful creature, what am I
That I dare to look her way;
Think I may hold dominion sweet,
Lord of the pulse that is lord of her
breast,
And dream of her beauty with tender
dread,
From the delicate Arab arch of her
feet
To the grace that, bright and light as
the crest
Of a peacock, sits on her shining
head,
And she knows it not: O, if she knew
it,
To know her beauty might half undo
it.
I know it the one bright thing to save
My yet young life in the wilds of
Time,
Perhaps from madness, perhaps from
crime,
Perhaps from a selfish grave.

II.

What, if she be fasten'd to this fool
lord,
Dare I bid her abide by her word?
Should I love her so well if she

Had given her word to a thing so
low?
Shall I love her well if she
Can break her word were it even for
me?
I trust that it is not so.

III.

Catch not my breath, O clamorous
heart,
Let not my tongue be a thrall to my
eye,
For I must tell her before we part,
I must tell her, or die.

XVII.

Go not, happy day,
From the shining fields,
Go not, happy day,
Till the maiden yields.
Rosy is the West,
Rosy is the South,
Roses are her cheeks,
And a rose her mouth
When the happy Ycs
Falters from her lips,
Pass and blush the news
Over glowing ships;
Over blowing seas,
Over seas at rest,
Pass the happy news,
Blush it thro' the West;
Till the red man dance
By his red cedar-tree,
And the red man's babe
Leap, beyond the sea.
Blush from West to East,
Blush from East to West,
Till the West is East,
Blush it thro' the West.
Rosy is the West,
Rosy is the South,
Roses are her cheeks,
And a rose her mouth.

XVIII.

I.

I have led her home, my love, my
only friend.
There is none like her, none.

And never yet so warmly ran my
blood
And sweetly, on and on
Calming itself to the long-wish'd-for
end,
Full to the banks, close on the prom-
ised good.

II.

None like her, none.
Just now the dry-tongued laurels' pat-
tering talk
Seem'd her light foot along the gar-
den walk,
And shook my heart to think she
comes once more;
But even then I heard her close the
door,
The gates of Heaven are closed, and
she is gone.

III.

There is none like her, none.
Nor will be when our summers have
deceased.
O, art thou sighing for Lebanon
In the long breeze that streams to thy
delicious East,
Sighing for Lebanon,
Dark cedar, tho' thy limbs have here
increased,
Upon a pastoral slope as fair,
And looking to the South, and fed
With honey'd rain and delicate air,
And haunted by the starry head
Of her whose gentle will has changed
my fate,
And made my life a perfumed altar-
flame;
And over whom thy darkness must
have spread
With such delight as theirs of old, thy
great
Forefathers of the thornless garden,
there
Shadowing the snow-limb'd Eve from
whom she came.

IV.

Here will I lie, while these long
branches sway,

And you fair stars that crown a
happy day
Go in and out as if at merry play,
Who am no more so all forlorn,
As when it seem'd far better to be
born
To labor and the mattock-harden'd
hand,
Than nursed at ease and brought to
understand
A sad astrology, the boundless plan
That makes you tyrants in your iron
skies,
Innumerable, pitiless, passionless eyes,
Cold fires, yet with power to burn and
brand
His nothingness into man.

V.

But now shine on, and what care I,
Who in this stormy gulf have found a
pearl
The countercharm of space and hol-
low sky,
And do accept my madness, and
would die
To save from some slight shame one
simple girl.

VI.

Would die; for sullen-seeming Death
may give
More life to Love than is or ever was
In our low world, where yet 'tis sweet
to live.
Let no one ask me how it came to
pass;
It seems that I am happy, that to me
A livelier emerald twinkles in the
grass,
A purer sapphire melts into the sea.

VII.

Not die; but live a life of truest
breath,
And teach true life to fight with mor-
tal wrongs.
O, why should Love, like men in
drinking-songs,
Spice his fair banquet with the dust
of death?

Make answer, Maud my bliss,
 Maud made my Maud by that long
 loving kiss,
 Life of my life, wilt thou not answer
 this?
 'The dusky strand of Death inwoven
 here
 With dear Love's tie, makes Love
 himself more dear.'

VIII.

Is that enchanted moan only the
 swell
 Of the long waves that roll in yonder
 bay?
 And hark the clock within, the silver
 knell
 Of twelve sweet hours that past in
 bridal white,
 And died to live, long as my pulses
 play;
 But now by this my love has closed
 her sight
 And given false death her hand, and
 stol'n away
 To dreamful wastes where footless
 fancies dwell
 Among the fragments of the golden
 day.
 May nothing there her maiden grace
 affright!
 Dear heart, I feel with thee the
 drowsy spell.
 My bride to be, my evermore de-
 light,
 My own heart's heart, my ownest
 own, farewell;
 It is but for a little space I go:
 And ye meanwhile far over moor and
 fell
 Beat to the noiseless music of the
 night!
 Has our whole earth gone nearer to
 the glow
 Of your soft splendors that you look
 so bright?
 I have climb'd nearer out of lonely
 Hell.
 Beat, happy stars, timing with things
 below,
 Beat with my heart more blest than
 heart can tell,

Blest, but for some dark undercurrent
 woe
 That seems to draw—but it shall not
 be so:
 Let all be well, be well.

XIX.

I.

Her brother is coming back to-night,
 Breaking up my dream of delight.

II.

My dream? do I dream of bliss?
 I have walk'd awake with Truth.
 O when did a morning shine
 So rich in atonement as this
 For my dark-dawning youth,
 Darken'd watching a mother decline
 And that dead man at her heart and
 mine:
 For who was left to watch her but I?
 Vet so did I let my freshness die.

III.

I trust that I did not talk
 To gentle Maud in our walk
 (For often in lonely wanderings
 I have cursed him even to lifeless
 things)
 But I trust that I did not talk,
 Not touch on her father's sin:
 I am sure I did but speak
 Of my mother's faded cheek
 When it slowly grew so thin,
 That I felt she was slowly dying
 Vext with lawyers and harass'd with
 debt:
 For how often I caught her with eyes
 all wet,
 Shaking her head at her son and sigh-
 ing
 A world of trouble within!

IV.

And Maud too, Maud was moved
 To speak of the mother she loved
 As one scarce less forlorn,
 Dying abroad and it seems apart
 From him who had ceased to share
 her heart,

And ever mourning over the feud,
The household Fury sprinkled with blood

By which our houses are torn :
How strange was what she said,
When only Maud and the brother
Hung over her dying bed—
That Maud's dark father and mine
Had bound us one to the other,
Betrothed us over their wine,
On the day when Maud was born ;
Seal'd her mine from her first sweet
breath.
Mine, mine by a right, from birth till
death.
Mine, mine—our fathers have sworn.

v.

But the true blood spilt had in it a
heat
To dissolve the precious seal on a
bond,
That, if left uncancell'd, had been so
sweet :
And none of us thought of a some-
thing beyond,
A desire that awoke in the heart of
the child,
As it were a duty done to the tomb,
To be friends for her sake, to be
reconciled ;
And I was cursing them and my doom,
And letting a dangerous thought run
wild
While often abroad in the fragrant
gloom
Of foreign churches—I see her there,
Bright English lily, breathing a prayer
To be friends, to be reconciled !

vi.

But then what a flint is he !
Abroad, at Florence, at Rome,
I find whenever she touch'd on me
This brother had laugh'd her down,
And at last, when each came home,
He had darken'd into a frown,
Chid her, and forbid her to speak
To me, her friend of the years before ;
And this was what had redden'd her
cheek
When I bow'd to her on the moor.

vii.

Yet Maud, altho' not blind
To the faults of his heart and mind,
I see she cannot but love him,
And says he is rough but kind,
And wishes me to approve him,
And tells me, when she lay
Sick once, with a fear of worse,
That he left his wine and horses and
play,
Sat with her, read to her, night and
day,
And tended her like a nurse.

viii.

Kind ? but the deathbed desire
Spurn'd by this heir of the liar—
Rough but kind ? yet I know
He has plotted against me in this,
That he plots against me still.
Kind to Maud ? that were not amiss.
Well, rough but kind ; why let it be
so :
For shall not Maud have her will ?

ix.

For, Maud, so tender and true,
As long as my life endures
I feel I shall owe you a debt,
That I never can hope to pay ;
And if ever I should forget
That I owe this debt to you
And for your sweet sake to yours ;
O then, what then shall I say ?—
If ever I *should* forget,
May God make me more wretched
Than ever I have been yet !

x.

So now I have sworn to bury
All this dead body of hate,
I feel so free and so clear
By the loss of that dead weight,
That I should grow light-headed, I
fear,
Fantastically merry ;
But that her brother comes, like a
blight
On my fresh hope, to the Hall to-
night.

XX.

I.

Strange, that I felt so gay,
 Strange, that I tried to-day
 To beguile her melancholy;
 The Sultan, as we name him,—
 She did not wish to blame him—
 But he vexed her and perplexed her
 With his worldly talk and folly:
 Was it gentle to reprove her
 For stealing out of view
 From a little lazy lover
 Who but claims her as his due?
 Or for chilling his caresses
 By the coldness of her manners,
 Nay, the plainness of her dresses?
 Now I know her but in two,
 Nor can pronounce upon it
 If one should ask me whether
 The habit, hat, and feather,
 Or the frock and gipsy bonnet
 Be the neater and completer;
 For nothing can be sweeter
 Than maiden Maud in either.

II.

But to-morrow, if we live,
 Our ponderous squire will give
 A grand political dinner
 To half the squirelings near;
 And Maud will wear her jewels,
 And the bird of prey will hover,
 And the titmouse hope to win her
 With his chirrup at her ear.

III.

A grand political dinner
 To the men of many acres,
 A gathering of the Tory,
 A dinner and then a dance
 For the maids and marriage-makers,
 And every eye but mine will glance
 At Maud in all her glory.

IV.

For I am not invited,
 But, with the Sultan's pardon,
 I am all as well delighted,
 For I know her own rose-garden,
 And mean to linger in it

Till the dancing will be over;
 And then, oh then, come out to me
 For a minute, but for a minute,
 Come out to your own true lover,
 That your true lover may see
 Your glory also, and render
 All homage to his own darling,
 Queen Maud in all her splendor.

XXI.

Rivulet crossing my ground,
 And bringing me down from the Hall
 This garden-rose that I found,
 Forgetful of Maud and me,
 And lost in trouble and moving round
 Here at the head of a tinkling fall,
 And trying to pass to the sea;
 O Rivulet, born at the Hall,
 My Maud has sent it by thee
 (If I read her sweet will right)
 On a blushing mission to me,
 Saying in odor and color, 'Ah, be
 Among the roses to-night.'

XXII.

I.

Come into the garden, Maud,
 For the black bat, night, has flown,
 Come into the garden, Maud,
 I am here at the gate alone;
 And the woodbine spices are wafted
 abroad,
 And the musk of the rose is blown.

II.

For a breeze of morning moves,
 And the planet of Love is on high,
 Beginning to faint in the light that
 she loves
 On a bed of daffodil sky,
 To faint in the light of the sun she
 loves,
 To faint in his light, and to die.

III.

All night have the roses heard
 The flute, violin, bassoon;
 All night has the casement jessamine
 stirr'd
 To the dancers dancing in tune;

Till a silence fell with the waking
bird,
And a hush with the setting moon.

IV.

I said to the lily, 'There is but one
With whom she has heart to be gay.
When will the dancers leave her
alone?

She is weary of dance and play.'
Now half to the setting moon are
gone,
And half to the rising day;
Low on the sand and loud on the
stone
The last wheel echoes away.

V.

I said to the rose, 'The brief night
goes
In babble and revel and wine.
O young lord-lover, what sighs are
those.
For one that will never be thine?
But mine, but mine,' so I sware to the
rose,
'For ever and ever, mine.'

VI.

And the soul of the rose went into my
blood,
As the music clash'd in the hall,
And long by the garden lake I stood,
For I heard your rivulet fall
From the lake to the meadow and on
to the wood,
Our wood, that is dearer than all;

VII.

From the meadow your walks have
left so sweet
That whenever a March-wind sighs
He sets the jewel-print of your feet
In violets blue as your eyes,
To the woody hollows in which we
meet
And the valleys of Paradise.

VIII.

The slender acacia would not shake

One long milk-bloom on the tree;
The white lake-blossom fell into the
lake

As the pimpernel dozed on the lea;
But the rose was awake all night for
your sake,

Knowing your promise to me;
The lilies and roses were all awake,
They sigh'd for the dawn and thee.

IX.

Queen rose of the rosebud garden of
girls,
Come hither, the dances are done,
In gloss of satin and glimmer of
pearls,
Queen lily and rose in one;
Shine out, little head, sunning over
with curls,
To the flowers, and be their sun.

X.

There has fallen a splendid tear
From the passion-flower at the gate.
She is coming, my dove, my dear;
She is coming, my life, my fate;
The red rose cries, 'She is near, she
is near;'
And the white rose weeps, 'She is
late;'
The larkspur listens, 'I hear, I hear;'
And the lily whispers, 'I wait.'

XI.

She is coming, my own, my sweet;
Were it ever so airy a tread,
My heart would hear her and beat,
Were it earth in an earthy bed;
My dust would hear her and beat.
Had I lain for a century dead;
Would start and tremble under her
feet,
And blossom in purple and red.

PART II.

I.

I.

'THE fault was mine, the fault was
mine'—

Why am I sitting here so stunn'd and
still,
Plucking the harmless wild-flower on
the hill?—

It is this guilty hand!—
And there rises ever a passionate cry
From underneath in the darkening
land—

What is it, that has been done?
O dawn of Eden bright over earth and
sky,

The fires of Hell brake out of thy
rising sun,

The fires of Hell and of Hate;
For she, sweet soul, had hardly spoken
a word,

When her brother ran in his rage to
the gate,

He came with the babe-faced lord;
Heap'd on her terms of disgrace,
And while she wept, and I strove to
be cool,

He fiercely gave me the lie,
Till I with as fierce an anger spoke,
And he struck me, madman, over the
face,

Struck me before the languid fool,
Who was gaping and grinning by:
Struck for himself an evil stroke;
Wrought for his house an irredeema-
ble woe;

For front to front in an hour we
stood,

And a million horrible bellowing
echoes broke

From the red-ribb'd hollow behind the
wood,

And thunder'd up into Heaven the
Christless code,

That must have life for a blow.

Ever and ever afresh they seem'd to
grow.

Was it he lay there with a fading eye?

'The fault was mine,' he whisper'd,
'fly!'

Then glided out of the joyous wood
The ghastly Wraith of one that I
know;

And there rang on a sudden a pas-
sionate cry,

A cry for a brother's blood:

It will ring in my heart and my ears,
till I die, till I die.

II.

Is it gone? my pulses beat—
What was it? a lying trick of the
brain?

Yet I thought I saw her stand,
A shadow there at my feet,
High over the shadowy land.

It is gone; and the heavens fall in a
gentle rain,

When they should burst and drown
with deluging storms

The feeble vassals of wine and anger
and lust,

The little hearts that know not how to
forgive:

Arise, my God, and strike, for we hold
Thee just,

Strike dead the whole weak race of
venomous worms,

That sting each other here in the
dust;

We are not worthy to live.

II.

I.

See what a lovely shell,
Small and pure as a pearl,
Lying close to my foot,
Frail, but a work divine,
Made so fairly well
With delicate spire and whorl,
How exquisitely minute,
A miracle of design!

II.

What is it? a learned man
Could give it a clumsy name.
Let him name it who can,
The beauty would be the same.

III.

The tiny cell is forlorn,
Void of the little living will
That made it stir on the shore.
Did he stand at the diamond door
Of his house in a rainbow frill?
Did he push, when he was uncurl'd,
A golden foot or a fairy horn
Thro' his dim water-world?

IV.

Slight, to be crush'd with a tap
Of my finger-nail on the sand,
Small, but a work divine,
Frail, but of force to withstand,
Year upon year, the shock
Of cataract seas that snap
The three decker's oaken spine
Athwart the ledges of rock,
Here on the Breton strand !

V.

Breton, not Briton ; here
Like a shipwreck'd man on a coast
Of ancient fable and fear—
Plagued with a flitting to and fro,
A disease, a hard mechanic ghost
That never came from on high
Nor ever arose from below,
But only moves with the moving eye,
Flying along the land and the main—
Why should it look like Maud ?
Am I to be overawed
By what I cannot but know
Is a juggle born of the brain ?

VI.

Back from the Breton coast,
Sick of a nameless fear,
Back to the dark sea-line
Looking, thinking of all I have lost ;
An old song vexes my ear ;
But that of Lamech is mine.

VII.

For years, a measureless ill,
For years, for ever, to part—
But she, she would love me still ;
And as long, O God, as she
Have a grain of love for me,
So long, no doubt, no doubt,
Shall I nurse in my dark heart,
However weary, a spark of will
Not to be trampled out.

VIII.

Strange, that the mind, when fraught
With a passion so intense
One would think that it well
Might drown all life in the eye,—

That it should, by being so over-
wrought,
Suddenly strike on a sharper sense
For a shell, or a flower, little things
Which else would have been past by !
And now I remember, I,
When he lay dying there,
I noticed one of his many rings
(For he had many, poor worm) and
thought
It is his mother's hair.

IX.

Who knows if he be dead ?
Whether I need have fled ?
Am I guilty of blood ?
However this may be,
Comfort her, comfort her, all things
good,
While I am over the sea !
Let me and my passionate love go
by,
But speak to her all things holy and
high,
Whatever happen to me !
Me and my harmful love go by ;
But come to her waking, and her
asleep,
Powers of the height, Powers of the
deep,
And comfort her tho' I die.

III.

Courage, poor heart of stone !
I will not ask thee why
Thou canst not understand
That thou art left for ever alone :
Courage, poor stupid heart of stone.—
Or if I ask thee why,
Care not thou to reply :
She is but dead, and the time is at
hand
When thou shalt more than die.

IV.

I.

O that 'twere possible
After long grief and pain
To find the arms of my true love
Round me once again !

II.

When I was wont to meet her
In the silent woody places
By the home that gave me birth,
We stood tranced in long embraces
Mixt with kisses sweeter sweeter
Than anything on earth.

III.

A shadow flits before me,
Not thou, but like to thee:
Ah Christ, that it were possible
For one short hour to see
The souls we loved, that they might
tell us
What and where they be.

IV.

It leads me forth at evening,
It lightly winds and steals
In a cold white robe before me,
When all my spirit reels
At the shouts, the leagues of lights,
And the roaring of the wheels.

V.

Half the night I waste in sighs,
Half in dreams I sorrow after
The delight of early skies;
In a wakeful doze I sorrow
For the hand, the lips, the eyes,
For the meeting of the morrow,
The delight of happy laughter,
The delight of low replies.

VI.

'Tis a morning pure and sweet,
And a dewy splendor falls
On the little flower that clings
To the turrets and the walls;
'Tis a morning pure and sweet,
And the light and shadow fleet;
She is walking in the meadow,
And the woodland echo rings;
In a moment we shall meet;
She is singing in the meadow
And the rivulet at her feet
Ripples on in light and shadow
To the ballad that she sings.

VII.

Do I hear her sing as of old,
My bird with the shining head,
My own dove with the tender eye?
But there rings on a sudden passion-
ate cry,
There is some one dying or dead,
And a sullen thunder is roll'd;
For a tumult shakes the city,
And I wake, my dream is fled;
In the shuddering dawn, behold,
Without knowledge, without pity,
By the curtains of my bed
That abiding phantom cold.

VIII.

Get thee hence, nor come again,
Mix not memory with doubt,
Pass, thou deathlike type of pain,
Pass and cease to move about!
'Tis the blot upon the brain
That *will* show itself without.

IX.

Then I rise, the cavedrops fall,
And the yellow vapors choke
The great city sounding wide;
The day comes, a dull red ball
Wrapt in drifts of lurid smoke
On the misty river-tide.

X.

Thro' the hubbub of the market
I steal, a wasted frame,
It crosses here, it crosses there,
Thro' all that crowd confused and
loud,
The shadow still the same;
And on my heavy eyelids
My anguish hangs like shame.

XI.

Alas for her that met me,
That heard me softly call,
Came glimmering thro' the laurels
At the quiet evenfall,
In the garden by the turrets
Of the old manorial hall.

XII.

Would the happy spirit descend,
From the realms of light and song,
In the chamber or the street,
As she looks among the blest,
Should I fear to greet my friend
Or to say 'Forgive the wrong,'
Or to ask her, 'Take me, sweet,
To the regions of thy rest'?

XIII.

But the broad light glares and beats,
And the shadow flits and fleets
And will not let me be;
And I loathe the squares and streets,
And the faces that one meets,
Hearts with no love for me:
Always I long to creep
Into some still cavern deep,
There to weep, and weep, and weep
My whole soul out to thee.

V.

I.

Dead, long dead,
Long dead!
And my heart is a handful of dust,
And the wheels go over my head,
And my bones are shaken with pain,
For into a shallow grave they are
thrust,
Only a yard beneath the street,
And the hoofs of the horses beat, beat,
The hoofs of the horses beat,
Beat into my scalp and my brain,
With never an end to the stream of
passing feet,
Driving, hurrying, marrying, burying
Clamor and rumble, and ringing and
clatter,
And here beneath it is all as bad,
For I thought the dead had peace,
but it is not so;
To have no peace in the grave, is that
not sad?
But up and down and to and fro,
Ever about me the dead men go;
And then to hear a dead man chatter
Is enough to drive one mad.

II.

Wretchedest age, since Time began,
They cannot even bury a man;
And tho' we paid our tithes in the
days that are gone,
Not a bell was rung, not a prayer was
read;
It is that which makes us loud in the
world of the dead;
There is none that does his work, not
one;
A touch of their office might have
sufficed,
But the churchmen fain would kill
their church,
As the churches have kill'd their
Christ.

III.

See, there is one of us sobbing,
No limit to his distress;
And another, a lord of all things, pray-
ing
To his own great self, as I guess;
And another, a statesman there, be-
traying
His party-secret, fool, to the press;
And yonder a vile physician, blabbing
The case of his patient—all for what?
To tickle the maggot born in an
empty head,
And wheedle a world that loves him
not,
For it is but a world of the dead.

IV.

Nothing but idiot gabble!
For the prophecy given of old
And then not understood,
Has come to pass as foretold;
Not let any man think for the public
good,
But babble, merely for babble.
For I never whisper'd a private affair
Within the hearing of cat or mouse,
No, not to myself in the closet alone,
But I heard it shouted at once from
the top of the house;
Everything came to be known.
Who told *him* we were there?

v.

Not that gray old wolf, for he came
not back
From the wilderness, full of wolves,
where he used to lie;
He has gather'd the bones for his
o'ergrown whelp to crack;
Crack them now for yourself, and
howl, and die.

vi.

Prophet, curse me the blabbing lip,
And curse me the British vermin, the
rat;
I know not whether he came in the
Hanover ship,
But I know that he lies and listens
mute
In an ancient mansion's crannies and
holes:
Arsenic, arsenic, sure, would do it,
Except that now we poison our babes,
poor souls!
It is all used up for that.

vii.

Tell him now: she is standing here at
my head;
Not beautiful now, not even kind;
He may take her now; for she never
speaks her mind,
But is ever the one thing silent here.
She is not *of* us, as I divine;
She comes from another stiller world
of the dead,
Stiller, not fairer than mine.

viii.

But I know where a garden grows,
Fairer than aught in the world be-
side,
All made up of the lily and rose
That blow by night, when the season
is good,
To the sound of dancing music and
flutes:
It is only flowers, they had no fruits,

And I almost fear they are not roses,
but blood;
For the keeper was one, so full of
pride,
He linkt a dead man there to a spec-
tral bride;
For he, if he had not been a Sultan of
brutes,
Would he have that hole in his side?

ix.

But what will the old man say?
He laid a cruel snare in a pit
To catch a friend of mine one stormy
day;
Yet now I could even weep to think
of it;
For what will the old man say
When he comes to the second corpse
in the pit?

x.

Friend, to be struck by the public
foe,
Then to strike him and lay him low,
That were a public merit, far,
Whatever the Quaker holds, from
sin;
But the red life spilt for a private
blow—
I swear to you, lawful and lawless
war
Are scarcely even akin.

xi.

O me, why have they not buried me
deep enough?
Is it kind to have made me a grave so
rough,
Me, that was never a quiet sleeper?
Maybe still I am but half-dead;
Then I cannot be wholly dumb;
I will cry to the steps above my head
And somebody, surely, some kind
heart will come
To bury me, bury me
Deeper, ever so little deeper.

PART III.

VI.

I.

My life has crept so long on a broken wing
Thro' cells of madness, haunts of horror and fear,
That I come to be grateful at last for a little thing :
My mood is changed, for it fell at a time of year
When the face of night is fair on the dewy downs,
And the shining daffodil dies, and the Charioteer
And starry Gemini hang like glorious crowns
Over Orion's grave low down in the west,
That like a silent lightning under the stars
She seem'd to divide in a dream from a band of the blest,
And spoke of a hope for the world in the coming wars—
'And in that hope, dear soul, let trouble have rest,
Knowing I tarry for thee,' and pointed to Mars
As he glow'd like a ruddy shield on the Lion's breast.

II.

And it was but a dream, yet it yielded a dear delight
To have look'd, tho' but in a dream, upon eyes so fair,
That had been in a weary world my one thing bright ;
And it was but a dream, yet it lighten'd my despair
When I thought that a war would arise in defence of the right,
That an iron tyranny now should bend or cease,
The glory of manhood stand on his ancient height,
Nor Britain's one sole God be the millionaire :
No more shall commerce be all in all, and Peace
Pipe on her pastoral hillock a languid note,
And watch her harvest ripen, her herd increase,
Nor the cannon-bullet rust on a slothful shore,
And the cobweb woven across the cannon's throat
Shall shake its threaded tears in the wind no more.

III.

And as months ran on and rumor of battle grew,
'It is time, it is time, O passionate heart,' said I
(For I cleaved to a cause that I felt to be pure and true),
'It is time, O passionate heart and morbid eye,
That old hysterical mock-disease should die,'
And I stood on a giant deck and mix'd my breath
With a loyal people shouting a battle cry,
Till I saw the dreary phantom arise and fly
Far into the North, and battle, and seas of death.

IV.

Let it go or stay, so I wake to the higher aims
Of a land that has lost for a little her lust of gold,

And love of a peace that was full of wrongs and shames,
 Horrible, hateful, monstrous, not to be told;
 And hail once more to the banner of battle unroll'd!
 Tho' many a light shall darken, and many shall weep
 For those that are crush'd in the clash of jarring claims,
 Yet God's just wrath shall be wreak'd on a giant liar;
 And many a darkness into the light shall leap,
 And shine in the sudden making of splendid names,
 And noble thought be freer under the sun,
 And the heart of a people beat with one desire;
 For the peace, that I deem'd no peace, is over and done,
 And now by the side of the Black and the Baltic deep,
 And deathful-grinning mouths of the fortress, flames
 The blood-red blossom of war with a heart of fire.

V.

Let it flame or fade, and the war roll down like a wind.
 We have proved we have hearts in a cause, we are noble still,
 And myself have awaked, as it seems, to the better mind;
 It is better to fight for the good than to rail at the ill;
 I have felt with my native land, I am one with my kind,
 I embrace the purpose of God, and the doom assign'd.

THE FIRST QUARREL.

(IN THE ISLE OF WIGHT.)

I.

'WAIT a little,' you say, 'you are sure
 it 'll all come right,'
 But the boy was born i' trouble, an'
 looks so wan an' so white;
 Wait! an' once I ha' waited—I hadn't
 to wait for long.
 Now I wait, wait, wait for Harry.—
 No, no, you are doing me wrong!
 Harry and I were married: the boy
 can hold up his head,
 The boy was born in wedlock, but
 after my man was dead;
 I ha' work'd for him fifteen years, an'
 I work an' I wait to the end.
 I am all alone in the world, an' you
 are my only friend.

II.

Doctor, if *you* can wait, I'll tell you
 the tale o' my life.

When Harry an' I were children, he
 call'd me his own little wife;
 I was happy when I was with him, an'
 sorry when he was away,
 An' when we play'd together, I loved
 him better than play;
 He workt me the daisy chain—he
 made me the cowslip ball,
 He fought the boys that were rude, an'
 I loved him better than all.
 Passionate girl tho' I was, an' often at
 home in disgrace,
 I never could quarrel with Harry—I
 had but to look in his face.

III.

There was a farmer in Dorset of
 Harry's kin, that had need
 Of a good stout lad at his farm; he
 sent, an' the father agreed;
 So Harry was bound to the Dorset-
 shire farm for years an' for
 years;
 I walked with him down to the quay,
 poor lad, an' we parted in
 tears.

The boat was beginning to move, we
heard them a-ringing the bell,
'I'll never love any but you, God bless
you, my own little Nell.'

IV.

I was a child, an' he was a child, an'
he came to harm;
There was a girl, a hussy, that workt
with him up at the farm,
One had deceived her an' left her
alone with her sin an' her shame,
And so she was wicked with Harry;
the girl was the most to blame.

V.

And years went over till I that was
little had grown so tall,
The men would say of the maids, 'Our
Nelly's the flower of 'em all.'
I didn't take heed o' *them*, but I taught
myself all I could
To make a good wife for Harry, when
Harry came home for good.

VI.

Often I seem'd unhappy, and often as
happy too,
For I heard it abroad in the fields 'I'll
never love any but you';
'I'll never love any but you' the
morning song of the lark,
'I'll never love any but you' the night-
ingale's hymn in the dark.

VII.

And Harry came home at last, but he
look'd at me sidelong and shy,
Vext me a bit, till he told me that so
many years had gone by,
I had grown so handsome and tall—
that I might ha' forgot him
somehow—
For he thought—there were other lads
—he was fear'd to look at me
now.

VIII.

Hard was the frost in the field, we
were married o' Christmas day,

Married among the red berries, an' all
as merry as May—
Those were the pleasant times, my
house an' my man were my
pride,
We seem'd like ships i' the Channel
a-sailing with wind an' tide.

IX.

But work was scant in the Isle, tho'
he tried the villages round,
So Harry went over the Solent to see
if work could be found;
An' he wrote 'I ha' six weeks' work,
little wife, so far as I know;
I'll come for an hour to-morrow, an'
kiss you before I go.'

X.

So I set to righting the house, for
wasn't he coming that day?
An' I hit on an old deal-box that was
push'd in a corner away,
It was full of old odds an' ends, an' a
letter along wi' the rest,
I had better ha' put my naked hand
in a hornets' nest.

XI.

'Sweetheart'—this was the letter—
this was the letter I read—
'You promised to find me work near
you, an' I wish I was dead—
Didn't you kiss me an' promise? you
haven't done it my lad,
An' I almost died o' your going away,
an' I wish that I had.'

XII.

I too wish that I had—in the pleasant
times that had past.
Before I quarrel'd with Harry—*my*
quarrel—the first an' the last.

XIII.

For Harry came in, an' I flung him
the letter that drove me wild,
An' he told it me all at once, as sim-
ple as any child,

'What can it matter, my lass, what I
did wi' my single life?
I ha' been as true to you as ever a
man to his wife;
An' *she* wasn't onc o' the worst.
'Then,' I said, 'I'm none o' the
best.'
An' he smiled at me, 'Ain't you, my
love? Come, come, little wife,
let it rest!
The man isn't like the woman, no
need to make such a stir.'
But he anger'd me all the more, an' I
said 'You were keeping with
her,
When I was a-loving you all along an'
the same as before.'
An' he didn't speak for a while, an' he
anger'd me more and more.
Then he patted my hand in his gentle
way, 'Let bygones be!'
'Bygones! you kept yours hush'd,' I
said, 'when you married me!
By-gones ma' be come-agains; an' *she*
—in her shame an' her sin—
You'll have her to nurse my child, if I
die o' my lying in!
You'll make her its second mother!
I hate her—an' I hate you!'
Ah, Harry, my man, you had better
ha' beaten me black an'
blue
Than ha' spoken as kind as you did,
when I were so crazy wi'
spite,
'Wait a little, my lass, I am sure it 'ill
all come right.'

XIV.

An' he took three turns in the rain,
an' I watch'd him, an' when he
came in
I felt that my heart was hard, he was
all wet thro' to the skin,
An' I never said 'off wi' the wet,' I
never said 'on wi' the dry.'
So I knew my heart was hard, when
he came to bid me goodbye.
'You said that you hated me, Ellen,
but that isn't true, you know;
I am going to leave you a bit—you'll
kiss me before I go.'

XV

'Going! you're going to her—kiss her
—if you will,' I said—
I was near my time wi' the boy, I
must ha' been light i' my
head—
'I had sooner be cursed than kiss'd!'
—I didn't know well what I
meant,
But I turn'd my face from *him*, an' he
turn'd *his* face an' he went.

XVI.

And then he sent me a letter, 'I've
gotten my work to do;
You wouldn't kiss me, my lass, an' I
never loved any but you;
I am sorry for all the quarrel an' sorry
for what she wrote,
I ha' six weeks' work in Jersey an' go
to-night by the boat.'

XVII.

An' the wind began to rise, an' I
thought of him out at sea,
An' I felt I had been to blame; he
was always kind to me.
'Wait a little, my lass, I am sure it 'ill
all come right'—
An' the boat went down that night—
the boat went down that night.

RIZPAH.

17—.

I.

WAILING, wailing, wailing, the wind
over land and sea—
And Willy's voice in the wind, 'O
mother, come out to me.'
Why should he call me to-night, when
he knows that I cannot go?
For the downs are as bright as day,
and the full moon stares at the
snow.

II.

We should be seen, my dear; they
would spy us out of the town.

The loud black nights for us, and the
storm rushing over the down,
When I cannot see my own hand, but
am led by the creak of the
chain,
And grovel and grope for my son till
I find myself drenched with the
rain.

III.

Anything fallen again? nay—what
was there left to fall?
I have taken them home, I have num-
ber'd the bones, I have hidden
them all.
What am I saying? and what are
you? do you come as a spy?
Falls? what falls? who knows? As
the tree falls so must it lie.

IV.

Who let her in? how long has she
been? you—what have you
heard?
Why did you sit so quiet? you never
have spoken a word.
O—to pray with me—yes—a lady—
none of their spies—
But the night has crept into my heart,
and begun to darken my eyes.

V.

Ah—you, that have lived so soft, what
shor' I *you* know of the night,
The blast and the burning shame and
the bitter frost and the fright?
I have done it, while you were asleep
—you were only made for the
day.
I have gather'd my baby together—
and now you may go your way.

VI.

Nay—for it's kind of you, Madam, to
sit by an old dying wife.
But say nothing hard of my boy, I
have only an hour of life.
I kiss'd my boy in the prison, before
he went out to die.
'They dared me to do it,' he said, and
he never has told me a lie.

I whipt him for robbing an orchard
once when he was but a child—
'The farmer dared me to do it,' he
said; he was always so wild—
And idle—and couldn't be idle—my
Willy, he never could rest.
The King should have made him a
soldier, he would have been
one of his best.

VII.

But he lived with a lot of wild mates,
and they never would let him
be good;
They swore that he dare not rob the
mail, and he swore that he
would;
And he took no life, but he took one
purse, and when all was done
He flung it among his fellows—I'll
none of it, said my son.

VIII.

I came into court to the Judge and
the lawyers. I told them my
tale,
God's own truth—but they kill'd him,
they kill'd him for robbing the
mail.
They hang'd him in chains for a show
—we had always borne a good
name—
To be hang'd for a thief—and then
put away—isn't that enough
shame?
Dust to dust—low down—let us hide!
but they set him so high
That all the ships of the world could
stare at him, passing by.
God 'ill pardon the hell-black raven
and horrible fowls of the air,
But not the black heart of the lawyer
who kill'd him and hang'd him
there.

IX.

And the jailer forced me away. I
had bid him my last goodbye;
They had fasten'd the door of his cell.
'O mother!' I heard him cry.

I couldn't get back tho' I tried, he
had something further to say,
And now I never shall know it. The
jailer forced me away.

X.

Then since I couldn't but hear that
cry of my boy that was dead,
They seized me and shut me up: they
fasten'd me down on my bed.
'Mother, O mother!'—he call'd in
the dark to me year after
year—
They beat me for that, they beat me—
you know that I couldn't but
hear;
And then at the last they found I had
grown so stupid and still
They let me abroad again—but the
creatures had worked their will.

XI.

Flesh of my flesh was gone, but bone
of my bone was left—
I stole them all from the lawyers—and
you, will you call it a theft?—
My baby, the bones that had suck'd
me, the bones that had laughed
and had cried—
Theirs? O no! they are mine—not
theirs—they had moved in my
side.

XII.

Do you think I was scared by the
bones? I kiss'd 'em, I buried
'em all—
I can't dig deep, I am old—in the
night by the churchyard wall.
My Willy 'ill rise up whole when the
trumpet of judgment 'ill sound,
But I charge you never to say that I
laid him in holy ground.

XIII.

They would scratch him up—they
would hang him again on the
cursed tree.
Sin? O yes—we are sinners, I know
—let all that be,

And read me a Bible verse of the
Lord's good will toward men—
'Full of compassion and mercy, the
Lord'—let me hear it again;
'Full of compassion and mercy—long-
suffering.' Yes, O yes!
For the lawyer is born but to murder
—the Saviour lives but to
bless.
He'll never put on the black cap
except for the worst of the
worst,
And the first may be last—I have
heard it in church—and the last
may be first.
Suffering—O long-suffering—yes, as
the Lord must know,
Year after year in the mist and the
wind and the shower and the
snow.

XIV.

Heard, have you? what? they have
told you he never repented his
sin.
How do they know it? are *they* his
mother? are *you* of his kin?
Heard! have you ever heard, when
the storm on the downs be-
gan,
The wind that 'ill wail like a child
and the sea that 'ill moan like
a man?

XV.

Election, Election and Reprobation—
it's all very well.
But I go to-night to my boy, and I
shall not find him in Hell.
For I cared so much for my boy that
the Lord has look'd into my
care,
And He means me I'm sure to be
happy with Willy, I know not
where.

XVI.

And if *he* be lost—but to save *my*
soul, that is all your desire:
Do you think that I care for *my* soul
if my boy be gone to the fire?



"UNCLASP'D THE WEDDED EAGLES OF HER BELT."—Page 84.



I have been with God in the dark—
go, go, you may leave me
alone—
You never have borne a child—you
are just as hard as a stone.

XVII.

Madam, I beg your pardon! I think
that you mean to be kind,
But I cannot hear what you say for
my Willy's voice in the wind—
The snow and the sky so bright—he
used but to call in the dark,
And he calls to me now from the
church and not from the gibbet
—for hark!
Nay—you can hear it yourself—it is
coming—shaking the walls—
Willy—the moon's in a cloud—
Good-night. I am going. He
calls.

THE NORTHERN COBBLER.

I.

WAÄIT till our Sally cooms in, fur
thou mun a' sights¹ to tell.
Eh, but I be maäin glad to secä tha
sa 'arty an' well.
'Cast awäy on a disolut land wi' a
vartical soon²!
Strange fur to goä fur to think what
säälors a' scëan an' a' doon;
'Summat to drink—sa' 'ot?' I 'a
nowt but Adam's wine:
What's the 'eät o' this little 'ill-side to
the 'eät o' the line?

¹ The vowels *ai*, pronounced separately
though in the closest conjunction, best
render the sound of the long *i* and *y* in this
dialect. But since such words as *cräin*
däin, *whäi*, *ai* (I), etc., look awkward
except in a page of express phonetics, I
have thought it better to leave the simple
i and *y*, and to trust that my readers will
give them the broader pronunciation.

² The *oe* short, as in 'wood.'

II.

'What's i' tha bottle a-stanning
theer?' I'll tell tha. Gin.
But if thou wants thy grog, tha mun
goä fur it down to the inn.
Naay—fur I be maäin-glad, but thaw
tha was iver sa dry,
Thou gits naw gin fro' the bottle
theer, an' I'll tell tha why.

III.

Meä an' thy sister was married, when
wur it? back-end o' June,
Ten year sin', and wa 'greed as well
as a fiddle i' tune:
I could fettle and clump owd booöts
and shoes wi' the best on 'em
all,
As fer as fro' Thursby thurn hup to
Harmsby and Hutterby Hall.
We was busy as becäs i' the bloom
an' as 'appy as 'art could think,
An' then the babby wur burn, and
then I taäkes to the drink.

IV.

An' I weänt gaäinsaäy it, my lad,
thaw I be hafe shaämed on it
now,
We could sing a good song at the
Plow, we could sing a good
song at the Plow;
Thaw once of a frosty night I slither'd
an' hurted my huck,¹
An' I coom'd neck-an-crop soomtimes
slaäpe down i' the squad an'
the muck:
An' once I fowt wi' the Taäilor—not
hafe ov a man, my lad—
Fur he scrawm'd an' scatted my
faäce like a cat, an' it maäde
'er sa mad
That Sally she turn'd a tongue-
banger,² an' raäted ma, 'Sot-
tin' thy braäins
Guzzlin' an' soäkin' an' smoäkin' an'
hawmin'³ about i' the laänes,
Soä sow-droonk that tha doesn not
touch thy 'at to the Squire;'

¹ Hip.

² Scold.

³ Lounging.

An' I loook'd cock-eyed at my noäse
 an' I seeäd 'im a-gittin' o' fire;
 But sin' I wur hallus i' liquor an' hal-
 lus as droonk as a king,
 Foälks' coostom flitted awaäy like a
 kite wi' a brokken string.

v.

An' Sally she wesh'd foalks' cloäths
 to keep the wolf fro' the door,
 Eh but the moor she riled me, she
 druv me to drink the moor,
 Fur I fun', when 'er back wur turn'd,
 wheer Sally's owd stockin' wur
 'id,
 An' I grabb'd the munny she maäde,
 and I weär'd it o' liquor, I did.

vi.

An' one night I cooms 'oäm like a
 bull gotten loose at a faäir,
 An' she wur a-waäitin' fo'mma, an'
 cryin' and teärin' 'er 'aäir,
 An' I tummled athurt the craädle an'
 sweär'd as I'd breäk ivrystick
 O' furnitur 'ere i' the 'ouse, an' I gied
 our Sally a kick,
 An' I mash'd the taäbles an' chairs,
 an' she an' the babby beäl'd,¹
 Fur I knaw'd naw moor what I did
 nor a mortal beäst o' the feäld.

vii.

An' when I waäked i' the murnin' I
 seeäd that our Sally went
 laämed
 Cos' o' the kick as I gied 'er, an' I
 wur dreädful ashaämed;
 An' Sally wur sloomy² an' draggle
 taäl'd in an owd turn gown,
 An' the babby's faäce wurn't wesh'd
 an' the 'ole 'ouse hupside down

viii.

An' then I minded our Sally sa pratty
 an' neät an' sweät,
 Straät as a pole an' cleän as a flower
 fro' 'eäd to feeät:

¹ Bellowed, cried out.² Sluggish, out of spirits.

An' then I minded the fust kiss I gied
 'er by Thursby thurn;
 Theer wur a lark a-singin' 'is best of
 a Sunday at murn,
 Couldn't see 'im, we 'eärd 'im a-
 mountin' oop 'igher an' 'igher,
 An' then 'e turn'd to the sun, an' 'e
 shined like a sparkle o' fire.
 'Doesn't tha see 'im, she axes, 'fur I
 can see 'im?' an' I
 Seeäd nobbut the smile o' the sun as
 danced in 'er pratty blue eye;
 An' I says 'I mun gie tha a kiss, an'
 Sally says 'Noä, thou moänt,
 But I gied 'er a kiss, an' then anoother,
 an' Sally says 'doant!'

ix.

An' when we coom'd into Meeätin', at
 fust she wur all in a tew,
 But, arter, we sing'd the 'ymn togethier
 like birds on a beugh;
 An' Muggins 'e preäch'd o' Hell-fire
 an' the loov o' God fur men,
 An' then upo' coomin' awaäy Sally
 gied me a kiss ov 'ersen.

x.

Heer wur a fall fro' a kiss to a kick
 like Saätan as fell
 Down out o' heaven i' Hell-fire—thaw
 theer's naw drinkin' i' Hell;
 Mea fur to kick our Sally as kep the
 wolf fro' the door,
 All along o' the drink, fur I loov'd 'er
 as well as afoor.

xi.

Sa like a greät num-cumpus I blub-
 ber'd awaäy o' the bed—
 'Weänt niver do it naw moor;' an'
 Sally looökt up an' she said,
 'I'll upowd it¹ tha weänt; thou'rt like
 the rest o' the men,
 Thou'll goä sniffin' about the tap till
 tha does it agéan.
 Theer's thy hennemy, man, an' I
 knaws, as knaws tha sa well,
 That, if tha seeäs 'im an' smells 'im
 tha'll foller 'im slick into Hell.'

¹ I'll uphold it.

XII.

'Naäy,' says I, 'fur I weänt goä sniffin'
about the tap.'
'Weänt tha?' she says, an' mysen I
thowt i' mysen 'mayhap.'
'Noä: 'an' I started awaäy like a shot,
an' down to the llinn,
An' I browt what tha seeäs stannin'
theer, yon big black bottle o' gin.

XIII.

'That caps owt,'¹ says Sally, an' saw
she begins to cry,
But I puts it inter 'er 'ands an' I says
to 'er, 'Sally,' says I,
'Stan' 'im theer i' the naäme o' the
Lord an' the power ov 'is
Graäce,
Stan' 'im theer, fur I'll looök my hen-
nemy strait i' the faäce,
Stan' 'im theer i' the winder, an' let
ma looök at 'im then,
'E seeäms naw moor nor watter, an'
'e's the Devil's oän sen.'

XIV.

An' I wur down i' tha mouth, couldn't
do naw work an' all,
Nasty an' snaggy an' shaäky, an'
poonch'd my 'and wi' the hawl,
But she wur a power o' coomfut, an'
sattled 'ersen o' my knee,
An' coäkd an' coodled me oop till
ageän I feel'd mysen free.

XV.

An' Sally she tell'd it about, an' 'foälk
stood a-gawmin'² in,
As thaw it wur summat bewitch'd
instead of a quart o' gin;
An' some on 'em said it wur watter—
an' I wur chousin' the wife,
Fur I couldn't 'owd 'ands off gin, wur
it nobbut to sääve my life;
An' blacksmith 'e strips me the thick
ov 'is airm, an' 'e shaws it to me,
'Feäl thou this! thou can't graw this
upo' watter!' says he.

¹ That's beyond everything.

² Staring vacantly.

An' Doctor 'e calls o' Sunday an' just
as candles was lit,
'Thou moänt do it,' he says, 'tha mun
break 'im off bit by bit.'
'Thou'rt but a Methody-man,' says
Parson, and laäys down 'is 'at,
An' 'e points to the bottle o' gin, 'but
I respects tha fur that';
An' Squire, his oän very sen, walks
down fro' the 'All to sec,
An' 'e spansks 'is 'and into mine, 'fur I
respects tha,' says 'e;
An' coostom ageän draw'd in like a
wind fro' far an' wide,
And browt me the booöts to be cob-
bled fro' hafe the cuntryside.

XVI.

An' theer 'e stans an' theer 'e shall
stan to my dying daäy;
I 'a gotten to loov 'im ageän in an-
oother kind of a waäy,
Proud on 'im, like, my lad, an' I
keeäps 'im cleän an' bright,
Loovs 'im, an' roobs 'im, an' doosts
'im, an' puts 'im back i' the light.

XVII.

Wouldn't a pint a' sarved as well as a
quart? Naw doubt:
But I liked a bigger feller to fight wi'
an' fowt it out.
Fine an' meller 'e mun be by this, if I
cared to taäste,
But I moänt, my lad, and I weänt fur
I'd feäl mysen cleän disgräaced.

XVIII.

An' once I said to the Missis, 'My
lass, when I cooms to die,
Smash the bottle to smithers, the
Devil's in 'im,' said I.
But arter I chaänged my mind, an' if
Sally be left aloän,
I'll hev 'im a-buried wi'mma an' taäke
'im afoor the Throän.

XIX.

Coom thou 'eer—yon laädy a-steppin'
along the streeät,

Doesn't tha know 'er—sa pratty, an'
feät, an' neät, an' sweät?
Look at the cloäths on 'er back,
thebbe ammost spick-span-new,
An' Tommy's faäce be as fresh as a
codlin wesh'd i' the dew.

XX.

'Ere be our Sally an' Tommy, an' we
be a-going to dine,
Bäacon an' taätes, an' a beslings-pud-
din'¹ an' Adam's wine;
But if tha wants ony grog tha mun goä
fur it down to the Hinn,
Fur I weänt shed a drop on 'is blood,
noä, not fur Sally's oän kin.

THE REVENGE.

A BALLAD OF THE FLEET.

I.

AT FLORES in the Azores Sir Richard
Grenville lay,
And a pinnacle, like a flutter'd bird,
came flying from far away:
'Spanish ships of war at sea! we
have sighted fifty-three!'
Then sware Lord Thomas Howard:
'Fore God I am no coward;
But I cannot meet them here, for my
ships are out of gear,
And the half my men are sick. I
must fly, but follow quick.
We are six ships of the line; can we
fight with fifty-three?'

II.

Then spake Sir Richard Grenville:
'I know you are no coward;
You fly them for a moment to fight
with them again.
But I've ninety men and more that are
lying sick ashore.
I should count myself a coward if I
left them, my Lord Howard,
To these Inquisition dogs and the
devildoms of Spain.'

¹ A pudding made with the first milk of
the cow after calving.

III.

So Lord Howard past away with five
ships of war that day,
Till he melted like a cloud in the
silent summer heaven;
But Sir Richard bore in hand all his
sick men from the land
Very carefully and slow.
Men of Bideford in Devon,
And we laid them on the ballast down
below;
For we brought them all aboard,
And they blest him in their pain, that
they were not left to Spain,
To the thumbscrew and the stake, for
the glory of the Lord.

IV.

He had only a hundred seamen to
work the ship and to fight,
And he sailed away from Flores till
the Spaniard came in sight,
With his huge sea-castles heaving
upon the weather bow.
'Shall we fight or shall we fly?
Good Sir Richard, tell us now,
For to fight is but to die!
There'll be little of us left by the
time this sun be set.'
And Sir Richard said again: 'We be
all good English men.
Let us bang these dogs of Seville, the
children of the devil,
For I never turn'd my back upon Don
or devil yet.'

V.

Sir Richard spoke and he laugh'd,
and we roar'd a hurrah, and so
The little Revenge ran on sheer into
the heart of the foe,
With her hundred fighters on deck,
and her ninety sick below;
For half of their fleet to the right and
half to the left were seen,
And the little Revenge ran on thro'
the long sea-lane between.

VI.

Thousands of their soldiers look'd
down from their decks and
laugh'd,

Thousands of their seamen made
mock at the mad little craft
Running on and on, till delay'd
By their mountain-like San Philip
that, of fifteen hundred tons,
And up-shadowing high above us
with her yawning tiers of guns,
Took the breath from our sails, and
we stay'd.

VII.

And while now the great San Philip
hung above us like a cloud
Whence the thunderbolt will fall
Long and loud,
Four galleons drew away
From the Spanish fleet that day,
And two upon the larboard and two
upon the starboard lay,
And the battle-thunder broke from
them all.

VIII.

But anon the great San Philip, she
bethought herself and went
Having that within her womb that
had left her ill content;
And the rest they came aboard us,
and they fought us hand to
hand,
For a dozen times they came with
their pikes and musqueteers,
And a dozen times we shook 'em off
as a dog that shakes his ears
When he leaps from the water to the
land.

IX.

And the sun went down, and the stars
came out far over the summer
sea,
But never a moment ceased the fight
of the one and the fifty-three.
Ship after ship, the whole night long,
their high-built galleons came,
Ship after ship, the whole night long,
with her battle-thunder and
flame;
Ship after ship, the whole night long,
drew back with her dead and
her shame.

For some were sunk and many were
shatter'd, and so could fight us
no more—
God of battles, was ever a battle like
this in the world before?

X.

For he said 'Fight on! fight on!'
Tho' his vessel was all but a wreck;
And it chanced that, when half of the
short summer night was gone,
With a grisly wound to be drest he
had left the deck,
But a bullet struck him that was
dressing it suddenly dead,
And himself he was wounded again in
the side and the head,
And he said 'Fight on! fight on!'

XI.

And the night went down, and the sun
smiled out far over the summer
sea,
And the Spanish fleet with broken
sides lay round us all in a ring;
But they dared not touch us again,
for they fear'd that we still
could sting,
So they watch'd what the end would
be.
And we had not fought them in vain,
But in perilous plight were we,
Seeing forty of our poor hundred were
slain,
And half of the rest of us maim'd for
life
In the crash of the cannonades and
the desperate strife;
And the sick men down in the hold
were most of them stark and
cold,
And the pikes were all broken or
bent, and the powder was all of
it spent;
And the masts and the rigging were
lying over the side;
But Sir Richard cried in his English
pride,
'We have fought such a fight for a
day and a night
As may never be fought again!
We have won great glory, my men!

And a day less or more
At sea or ashore,
We die—does it matter when?
Sink me the ship, Master Gunner—
sink her, split her in twain!
Fall into the hands of God, not into
the hands of Spain!

XII.

And the gunner said 'Ay, ay,' but
the seamen made reply:
'We have children, we have wives,
And the Lord hath spared our lives.
We will make the Spaniard promise,
if we yield, to let us go;
We shall live to fight again and to
strike another blow.'
And the lion there lay dying, and they
yielded to the foe.

XIII.

And the stately Spanish men to their
flagship bore him then,
Where they laid him by the mast, old
Sir Richard caught at last,
And they praised him to his face with
their courtly foreign grace;
But he rose upon their decks, and he
cried:
'I have fought for Queen and Faith
like a valiant man and true;
I have only done my duty as a man is
bound to do:
With a joyful spirit I Sir Richard
Grenville die!'
And he fell upon their decks, and he
died.

XIV.

And they stared at the dead that had
been so valiant and true,
And had holden the power and glory
of Spain so cheap
That he dared her with one little ship
and his English few;
Was he devil or man? He was devil
for aught they knew,
But they sank his body with honor
down into the deep,

And they mann'd the Revenge with a
swarthier alien crew,
And away she sail'd with her loss and
long'd for her own;
When a wind from the lands they had
ruin'd awoke from sleep,
And the water began to heave and the
weather to moan,
And or ever that evening ended a
great gale blew,
And a wave like the wave that is
raised by an earthquake grew,
Till it smote on their hulls and their
sails and their masts and their
flags,
And the whole sea plunged and fell
on the shot-shatter'd navy of
Spain,
And the little Revenge herself went
down by the island crags
To be lost evermore in the main.

THE SISTERS.

THEY have left the doors ajar; and
by their clash,
And prelude on the keys, I know the
song,
Their favorite—which I call 'The
Tables Turned.'
Evelyn begins it 'O diviner Air.'

EVELYN.

O diviner Air,
Thro' the heat, the drowth, the dust,
the glare,
Far from out the west in shadowing
showers,
Over all the meadow baked and bare,
Making fresh and fair
All the bowers and the flowers,
Fainting flowers, faded bowers,
Over all this weary world of ours,
Breathe, diviner Air!

A sweet voice that—you scarce could
better that.
Now follows Edith echoing Evelyn.

EDITH.

O diviner light,
Thro' the cloud that roofs our noon
with night,
Thro' the blotting mist, the blinding
showers,
Far from out a sky for ever bright,
Over all the woodland's flooded
bowers,
Over all the meadow's drowning
flowers,
Over all this ruin'd world of ours,
Break, diviner light!

Marvellously like, their voices—and
themselves!
Tho' one is somewhat deeper than the
other,
As one is somewhat graver than the
other—
Edith than Evelyn. Your good
Uncle, whom
You count the father of your fortune,
longs
For this alliance: let me ask you
then,
Which voice most takes you? for I
do not doubt
Being a watchful parent, you are
taken
With one or other: tho' sometimes I
fear
You may be flickering, fluttering in a
doubt
Between the two—which must not be
—which might
Be death to one: they both are beau-
tiful:
Evelyn is gayer, wittier, prettier,
says
The common voice, if one may trust
it: she?
No! but the paler and the graver,
Edith.
Woo her and gain her then: no wa-
vering, boy!
The graver is perhaps the one for
you
Who jest and laugh so easily and so
well.
For love will go by contrast, as by
likes.

No sisters ever prized each other
more.
Not so: their mother and her sister
loved
More passionately still.

But that my best
And oldest friend, your Uncle, wishes
it,
And that I know you worthy every-
way
To be my son, I might, perchance, be
loath
To part them, or part from them: and
yet one
Should marry, or all the broad lands
in your view
From this bay window—which our
house has held
Three hundred years—will pass col-
laterally.

My father with a child on either
knee,
A hand upon the head of either child,
Smoothing their locks, as golden as
his own
Were silver, 'get them wedded'
would he say.
And once my prattling Edith ask'd
him 'why?'
Ay, why? said he, 'for why should
I go lame?'
Then told them of his wars, and of
his wound.
For see—this wine—the grape from
whence it flow'd
Was blackening on the slopes of Por-
tugal,
When that brave soldier, down the
terrible ridge
Plunged in the last fierce charge at
Waterloo,
And caught the laming bullet. He
left me this,
Which yet retains a memory of its
youth,
As I of mine, and my first passion.
Come
Here's to your happy union with my
child!

Yet must you change your name:
no fault of mine!

You say that you can do it as willingly
 As birds make ready for their bridal-time
 By change of feather: for all that, my boy,
 Some birds are sick and sullen when they moult.
 An old and worthy name! but mine that stirr'd
 Among our civil wars and earlier too
 Among the Roses, the more venerable.
 I care not for a name—no fault of mine.
 Once more—a happier marriage than my own!

You see yon Lombard poplar on the plain.
 The highway running by it leaves a breadth
 Of sward to left and right, where, long ago,
 One bright May morning in a world of song,
 I lay at leisure, watching overhead
 The aerial poplar wave, an amber spire.

I dozed; I woke. An open landau-let
 Whirl'd by, which, after it had past me, show'd
 Turning my way, the loveliest face on earth.
 The face of one there sitting opposite,
 On whom I brought a strange unhappiness,
 That time I did not see.

Love at first sight
 May seem—with goodly rhyme and reason for it—
 Possible—at first glimpse, and for a face
 Gone in a moment—strange. Yet once, when first
 I came on lake Llanberris in the dark,
 A moonless night with storm—one lightning-fork

Flash'd out the lake; and tho' I loiter'd there
 The full day after, yet in retrospect
 That less than momentary thunder-sketch
 Of lake and mountain conquers all the day.

The Sun himself has linn'd the face for me.
 Not quite so quickly, no, nor half as well.
 For look you here—the shadows are too deep,
 And like the critic's blurring comment make
 The veriest beauties of the work appear
 The darkest faults: the sweet eyes frown: the lips
 Seem but a gash. My sole memorial
 Of Edith—no, the other,—both indeed.

So that bright face was flash'd thro' sense and soul
 And by the poplar vanish'd—to be found
 Long after, as it seem'd, beneath the tall
 Tree-bowers, and those long-sweeping beechen boughs
 Of our New Forest. I was there alone:
 The phantom of the whirling landau-let
 For ever past me by: when one quick peal
 Of laughter drew me thro' the glimmering glades
 Down to the snowlike sparkle of a cloth
 On fern and foxglove. Lo, the face again,
 My Rosalind in this Arden—Edith—all
 One bloom of youth, health, beauty, happiness,
 And moved to merriment at a passing jest.

There one of those about her knowing me

Call'd me to join them ; so with these
I spent
What seem'd my crowning hour, my
day of days.

I woo'd her then, nor unsuccessful-
fully,
The worse for her, for me ! was I
content ?
Ay—no, not quite ; for now and then
I thought
Laziness, vague love-longings, the
bright May,
Had made a heated haze to magnify
The charm of Edith—that a man's
ideal
Is high in Heaven, and lodged with
Plato's God,
Not findable here—content, and not
content,
In some such fashion as a man may
be
That having had the portrait of his
friend
Drawn by an artist, looks at it, and
says,
' Good ! very like ! not altogether he.'

As yet I had not bound myself by
words,
Only, believing I loved Edith, made
Edith love me: Then came the day
when I,
Flattering myself that all my doubts
were fools
Born of the fool this Age that doubts
of all—
Not I that day of Edith's love or
mine—
Had braced my purpose to declare
myself:
I stood upon the stairs of Paradise.
The golden gates would open at a
word.
I spoke it—told her of my passion,
seen
And lost and found again, had got
so far,
Had caught her hand, her eyelids fell
—I heard
Wheels, and a noise of welcome at
the doors—
On a sudden after two Italian years

I had set the blossom of her health
again,
The younger sister, Evelyn, enter'd—
there,
There was the face, and altogether
she.
The mother fell about the daughter's
neck,
The sisters closed in one another's
arms,
Their people throng'd about them
from the hall,
And in the thick of question and reply
I fled the house, driven by one angel
face,
And all the Furies.

I was bound to her ;
I could not free myself in honor—
bound
Not by the sounded letter of the word,
But counterpressures of the yielded
hand
That timorously and faintly echoed
mine,
Quick blushes, the sweet dwelling of
her eyes
Upon me when she thought I did not
see—
Were these not bonds ? nay, nay, but
could I wed her
Loving the other ? do her that great
wrong ?
Had I not dream'd I loved her yester-
morn ?
Had I not known where Love, at first
a fear,
Grew after marriage to full height and
form ?
Yet after marriage, that mock-sister
there—
Brother-in-law—the fiery nearness of
it—
Unlawful and disloyal brotherhood—
What end but darkness could ensue
from this
For all the three ? So Love and Honor
jarr'd
Tho' Love and Honor join'd to raise
the full
High-tide of doubt that sway'd me up
and down
Advancing nor retreating.

Edith wrote:
 'My mother bids me ask' (I did not
 tell you—
 A widow with less guile than many a
 child.
 God help the wrinkled children that
 are Christ's
 As well as the plump cheek—she
 wrought us harm,
 Poor soul, not knowing) 'are you ill?'
 (so ran
 The letter) 'you have not been here
 of late.
 You will not find me here. At last I
 go
 On that long-promised visit to the
 North.
 I told your wayside story to my mother
 And Evelyn. She remembers you.
 Farewell.
 Pray come and see my mother. Al-
 most blind
 With ever-growing cataract, yet she
 thinks
 She sees you when she hears. Again
 farewell.'

Cold words from one I had hoped
 to warm so far
 That I could stamp my image on her
 heart!
 'Pray come and see my mother, and
 farewell.'
 Cold, but as welcome as free airs of
 heaven
 After a dungeon's closeness. Selfish,
 strange!
 What dwarfs are men! my strangled
 vanity
 Utter'd a stifled cry—to have vexed
 myself
 And all in vain for her—cold heart or
 none—
 No bride for me. Yet so my path
 was clear
 To win the sister.

Whom I woo'd and won.
 For Evelyn knew not of my former
 suit,
 Because the simple mother work'd
 upon
 By Edith pray'd me not to whisper
 of it.

And Edith would be bridesmaid on
 the day.
 But on that day, not being all at
 ease,
 I from the altar glancing back upon
 her,
 Before the first 'I will' was utter'd,
 saw
 The bridesmaid pale, statuelike, pas-
 sionless—
 'No harm, no harm' I turn'd again,
 and placed
 My ring upon the finger of my bride.

So, when we parted, Edith spoke no
 word,
 She wept no 'tear, but round my
 Evelyn clung
 In utter silence for so long, I thought
 'What, will she never set her sister
 free?'

We left her, happy each in each,
 and then,
 As tho' the happiness of each in each
 Were not enough, must fain have tor-
 rents, lakes,
 Hills, the great things of Nature and
 the fair,
 To lift us as it were from common-
 place,
 And help us to our joy. Better have
 sent
 Our Edith thro' the glories of the
 earth,
 To change with her horizon, if true
 Love
 Were not his own imperial all-in-all.

Far off we went. My God, I would
 not live
 Save that I think this gross hard-
 seeming world
 Is our misshaping vision of the Powers
 Behind the world, that make our griefs
 our gains.

For on the dark night of our
 marriage-day
 The great Tragedian, that had
 quenched herself
 In that assumption of the bridesmaid
 —she

That loved me—our true Edith—her
brain broke
With over-acting, till she rose and
fled
Beneath a pitiless rush of Autumn
rain
To the deaf church—to be let in—to
pray
Before *that* altar—so I think; and
there
They found her beating the hard Prot-
estant doors.
She died and she was buried ere we
knew.

I learnt it first. I had to speak.
At once
The bright quick smile of Evelyn, that
had sunn'd
The morning of our marriage, past
away:
And on our home-return the daily
want
Of Edith in the house, the garden,
still
Haunted us like her ghost; and by
and by,
Either from that necessity for talk
Which lives with blindness, or plain
innocence
Of nature, or desire that her lost
child
Should earn from both the praise of
heroism,
The mother broke her promise to the
dead,
And told the living daughter with
what love
Edith had welcomed my brief wooing
of her,
And all her sweet self-sacrifice and
death.

Henceforth that mystic bond be-
twixt the twins—
Did I not tell you they were twins?—
prevail'd
So far that no caress could win my
wife
Back to that passionate answer of full
heart
I had from her at first. Not that her
love,

Tho' scarce as great as Edith's power
of love,
Had lessen'd, but the mother's garru-
lous wail
For ever woke the unhappy Past
again,
Till that dead bridesmaid, meant to be
my bride,
Put forth cold hands between us, and
I fear'd
The very fountains of her life were
chill'd;
So took her thence, and brought her
here, and here
She bore a child, whom reverently we
call'd
Edith; and in the second year was
born
A second—this I named from her own
self,
Evelyn; then two weeks—no more—
she joined,
In and beyond the grave, that one she
loved.
Now in this quiet of declining
life,
Thro' dreams by night and trances of
the day,
The sisters glide about me hand in
hand,
Both beautiful alike, nor can I tell
One from the other, no, nor care to
tell
One from the other, only know they
come,
They smile upon me, till, remember-
ing all
The love they both have borne me,
and the love
I bore them both—divided as I am
From either by the stillness of the
grave—
I know not which of these I love the
best.

But *you* love Edith; and her own
true eyes
Are traitors to her; our quick
Evelyn—
The merrier, prettier, wittier, as they
talk,
And not without good reason, my
good son—

Is yet untouch'd: and I that hold
 them both
 Dearest of all things—well, I am not
 sure—
 But if there lie a preference either-
 way,
 And in the rich vocabulary of Love
 'Most dearest' be a true superlative—
 I think / likewise love your Edith
 most.

THE VILLAGE WIFE; OR, THE ENTAIL.¹

I.

'OUSE-KEEPER sent tha my lass, fur
 New Squire coom'd last night.
 Butter an' heggs—yis—yis. I'll goä
 wi' tha back: all right;
 Butter I warrants be prime, an' I war-
 rants the heggs be as well,
 Hafe a pint o' milk runs out when ya
 breäks the shell.

II.

Sit thysen down fur a bit: hev a glass
 o' cowslip wine!
 I liked the owd Squire an' 'is gells as
 thaw they was gells o' mine,
 Fur then we was all es one, the Squire
 an' 'is darters an' me,
 Hall but Miss Annie, the heldest, I
 niver not took to she:
 But Nelly, the last of the cletch,² I
 liked 'er the fust on 'em all,
 Fur hoffsens we talkt o' my darter es
 died o' the fever at fall:
 An' I thowt 'twur the will o' the Lord,
 but Miss Annie she said it wur
 draäins,
 Fur she hedn't naw coomfut in 'er, an'
 arn'd naw thanks fur 'er päains.
 Eh! thebbe all wi' the Lord my
 childer, I han't gotten none!
 Sa new Squire's coom'd wi' 'is taäil in
 'is 'and, an' owd Squire's gone.

¹ See note to 'Northern Cobbler.'

² A brood of chickens.

III.

Fur 'staäte be i' taäil, my lass: tha
 dosn' know what that be?
 But I knows the law, I does, for the
 lawyer ha tow'd it me.
 'When theer's naw 'eä'd to a 'Ouse by
 the fault o' that ere maäle—
 The gells they counts fur nowt, and
 the next un he taäkes the taäil.'

IV.

What be the next un like? can tha tell
 ony harm on 'im lass?—
 Naay sit down—naw 'urry—sa
 cowd!—hev another glass!
 Straänge an' cowd fur the time! we
 may happen a fall o' snaw—
 Not es I cares fur to hear ony harm,
 but I likes to know.
 An' I 'oäps es 'e beänt booöklarn'd:
 but 'e dosn' not coom fro' the
 shere;
 We'd anew o' that wi' the Squire, an'
 we haätes booöklarnin' ere.

V.

Fur Squire wur a Varsity scholard, an'
 niver lookt arter the land—
 Whoäts or tonups or taätes—'e 'ed
 hallus a booök i' 'is 'and.
 Hallus aloan wi' 'is booöks, thaw nigh
 upo' seventy year.
 An' booöks, what's booöks? thou
 knows thebbe naither 'ere nor
 theer.

VI.

An' the gells, they hedn't naw taäils,
 an' the lawyer he tow'd it me
 That 'is taäil were soä tied up es he
 couldn't cut down a tree!
 'Drat the trees,' says I, to be sewer I
 haätes 'em, my lass,
 Fur we puts the muck o' the land an'
 they sucks the muck fro' the
 grass.

VII.

An' Squire wur hallus a-smillin', an'
 gied to the tramps goin' by—

An' all o' the wust i' the parish—wi' hoiffens a drop in 'is eye.
 An' ivry darter o' Squire's hed her awn ridin-erse to 'ersen,
 An' they rampaged about wi' their grooms, an' was 'untip' arter the men,
 An' hallus a-dallack¹ an' dizen'd out, an' a-buyin' new cloäthes,
 While 'e sit like a great glimmer-gowk² wi' 'is glasses athurt 'is noäse,
 An' 'is noäse sa grafted wi' snuff es it couldn't be scroob'd awaäy,
 Fur atween 'is readin' an' writin' 'e sniffit up a box in a daäy.
 An' 'e niver runn'd arter the fox, nor arter the birds wi' 'is gun.
 An' 'e niver not shot one 'are, but 'e leaved it to Charlie 'is son,
 An' 'e niver not fish'd 'is awn ponds, but Charlie 'e catch'd the pike,
 For 'e warn't not burnt to the land, an' 'e didn't take kind to it like:
 But I ears es 'e'd gie fur a howry³ owd book thutty pound an' moor,
 An' 'e'd wrote an owd book, his awn sen, sa I know'd es 'e'd coom to be poor;
 An' 'e gied—I be fear'd fur to tell tha 'ow much—fur an owd scratted stoän,
 An' 'e digg'd up a loomp i' the land an' 'e got a brown pot an' a boän.
 An' 'e bowt owd money, es wouldn't goä, wi' good gowd o' the Queen,
 An' 'e bowt little statutes all-naäkt an' which was a shaäme to be seen;
 But 'e niver looökt ower a bill, nor 'e niver not seed to owt.
 An' 'e niver knowd nowt but booäks, an' booäks, as thou knows, beänt nowt.

VIII.

But owd Squire's laädy es long es she lived she kep 'em all clear,
 Thaw es long es she lived I niver hed none o' 'er darters 'ere;

¹ Overdrest in gay colors.

² Owl.

³ Filthy.

But arter she died we was all es one, the childer an' me,
 An' sarvints runn'd in an' out, an' offens we hed 'em to tea.
 Lawk! 'ow I laugh'd when the lasses 'ud talk o' their Missis's waäys,
 An' the Missis's talk'd o' the lasses.
 —I'll tell tha some o' these daäys.
 Hoänly Miss Annie were saw stuck oop, like 'er mother afor—
 'Er an' 'er blessed darter—they niver derken'd my door.

IX.

An' Squire 'e smiled an' 'e smiled till 'e'd gotten a fright at last,
 An' 'e calls fur 'is son, fur the 'turney's letters they foller'd sa fast;
 But Squire wur afear'd o' 'is son, an' 'e says to 'im, meek as a mouse,
 'Lad, thou mun cut off thy taäil, or the gells 'ull goä to the 'Ouse,
 Fur I finds es I be that i' debt, es I 'oäps es thou'll 'elp me a bit,
 An' if thou'll 'gree to cut off thy taäil I may saave mysen yit.'

X.

But Charlie 'e sets back 'is ears, an' 'e sweärs, an' 'e says to 'im 'Noa.
 I've gotten the 'staäte by the taäil an' be dang'd if I iver let goä!
 'Coom! coom! feyther,' 'e says, 'why shouldn't thy booöks be sowd?
 I hears es soom o' thy booöks mebbe worth their weight i' gowd.'

XI.

Heäps an' heäps o' booöks, I ha' see'd 'em, belong'd to the Squire,
 But the lasses 'ed teärd out leäves i' the middle to kindle the fire;
 Sa moäst on 'is owd big booöks fetch'd nigh to nowt at the saäle,
 And Squire were at Charlie ageän to git 'im to cut off 'is taäil.

XII.

Ya wouldn't find Charlie's likes—'e were that outdacious at 'oäm,

Not thaw ya went fur to raäke out
 Hell wi' a small-tooth coämb—
 Droonk wi' the Quoloty's wine, an'
 droonk wi' the farmer's aäle,
 Mad wi' the lasses an' all—an' 'e
 wouldn't cut off the taäil.

XIII.

Thou's coom'd oop by the beck; and
 a thurn be a-grawin' theer,
 I niver ha seed it sa white wi' the
 Maäy es I see'd it to-year—
 Theerabouts Charlie joomp!—and it
 gied me a scare tother night,
 Fur I thowt it wur Charlie's ghoäst i'
 the derk, fur it looökt sa white.
 'Billy,' says 'e, 'hev a joomp!—thaw
 the banks o' the beck be sa high,
 Fur he ca'd 'is 'erse Billy-rough-un,
 thaw niver a hair wur awry;
 But Billy fell bakkuds o' Charlie, an'
 Charlie 'e brok 'is neck,
 Sa theer wur a hend o' the taäil, fur
 'e lost 'is taäil i' the beck.

XIV.

Sa 'is taäil wur lost an' 'is booöks wur
 gone an' 'is boy wur deäd,
 An' Squire 'e smiled an' 'e smiled, but
 'e niver not lift oop 'is 'eä:
 Hallus a soft un Squire! an' 'e
 smiled, fur 'e hedn't naw friend,
 Sa feyther an' son was buried to-
 gither, an' this wur the hend.

XV.

An' Parson as hesn't the call, nor the
 mooney, but hes the pride,
 'E reäds of a sewer an' sartin 'oäp o'
 the tother side;
 But I beänt that sewer es the Lord,
 howsiver they praäy'd an'
 praäy'd,
 Lets them inter 'eaven cäs es leäves
 their debts to be paäid.
 Siver the mou'ds rattled down upo'
 poor owd Squire i' the wood.
 An' I cried along wi' the gells, fur
 they weänt niver coom to naw
 good.

XVI.

Fur Molly the long un she walkt
 awaäy wi' a hofficer lad,
 An' nawbody 'eärd on 'er sin, sa o'
 coorse she be gone to the bad!
 An' Lucy wur laäme o' one leg, sweet-
 'arts she niver 'ed none—
 Straänge an' unheppen¹ Miss Lucy!
 we naämed her 'Dot an' gaw
 one!
 An' Hetty wur weak i' the hattics, wi'
 out ony harm i' the legs,
 An' the fever 'ed baäked Jinny's 'eärd
 as bald as one o' them heggs,
 An' Nelly wur up fro' the craädle as
 big i' the mouth as a cow,
 An' saw she mun hammergrate,² lass,
 or she weänt git a maäte ony-
 how!
 An' es for Miss Annie es call'd me
 afoor my awn foälks to my faäce
 'A hignorant village wife as 'ud hev
 to be larn'd her awn plaäce,'
 Hes fur Miss Hannie the heldest hes
 now be a-grawin' sa howd,
 I knaws that mooch o' sheä, es it
 beänt not fit to be towd!

XVII.

Sa I didn't not taäke it kindly ov owd
 Miss Annie to saäy
 Es I should be talkin ageän 'em, es
 soon es they went awaäy,
 Fur, lawks! 'ow I cried when they
 went, an' our Nelly she gied me
 'er 'and,
 Fur I'd ha done owt for the Squire
 an' 'is gells es belong'd to the
 land;
 Booöks, es I said afoor, thebbe ney-
 ther 'ere nor theer!
 But I sarved 'em wi' butter an' heggs
 fur huppuds o' twenty year.

XVIII.

An' they hallus paäid what I hax'd,
 sa I hallus deal'd wi' the Hall,
 An' they knaw'd what butter wur, an'
 they knaw'd what a hegg wur
 an' all;

¹ Ungainly, awkward. ² Emigrate.

Hugger-mugger they lived, but they
wasn't that easy to please,
Till I gied 'em Ilinjian curn, an' they
laaid big heggs es tha seas;
An' I niver puts saame¹ i' my butter,
they does it at Willis's farm,
Taaste another drop o' the wine—
twcant do tha naw harm.

XIX.

Sa new Squire's coom'd wi' 'is taail in
'is 'and, an' owd Squire's gone;
I heard 'im a roomlin' by, but arter
my nightcap wur on;
Sa I han't clapt eyes on 'im yit, fur
he coom'd last night sa laate—
Pluksh! ! !² the hens i' the peäs!
why didn't tha hesp the gaäte?

IN THE CHILDREN'S
HOSPITAL.

EMMIE.

I.

OUR doctor had call'd in another, I
never had seen him before,
But he sent a chill to my heart when I
saw him come in at the door,
Fresh from the surgery-schools of
France and of other lands—
Harsh red hair, big voice, big chest,
big merciless hands!
Wonderful cures he had done, O yes,
but they said too of him
He was happier using the knife than
in trying to save the limb,
And that I can well believe, for he
look'd so coarse and so red,
I could think he was one of those who
would break their jests on the
dead,
And mangle the living dog that had
loved him and fawn'd at his
knee—

¹ Lard.

² A cry accompanied by a clapping of
hands to scare trespassing fowl.

Drench'd with the hellish oorali—
that ever such things should
be!

II.

Here was a boy—I am sure that some
of our children would die
But for the voice of Love, and the
smile, and the comforting eye—
Here was a boy in the ward, every
bone seem'd out of its place—
Caught in a mill and crush'd—it was
all but a hopeless case:
And he handled him gently enough;
but his voice and his face were
not kind,
And it was but a hopeless case, he
had seen it and made up his
mind,
And he said to me roughly 'The lad
will need little more of your
care.'
'All the more need,' I told him, 'to
seek the Lord Jesus in prayer;
They are all his children here, and I
pray for them all as my own:'
But he turn'd to me, 'Ay, good
woman, can prayer set a broken
bone?'
Then he mutter'd half to himself, but
I know that I heard him say
'All very well—but the good Lord
Jesus has had his day.'

III.

Had? has it come? It has only
dawn'd. It will come by and
by.
O how could I serve in the wards if
the hope of the world were a
lie?
How could I bear with the sights and
the loathsome smells of dis-
ease
But that He said 'Ye do it to me,
when ye do it to these'?

IV.

So he went. And we past to this
ward where the younger chil-
dren are laid:

Here is the cot of our orphan, our
darling, our meek little maid;
Empty you see just now! We have
lost her who loved her so
much—

Patient of pain tho' as quick as a
sensitive plant to the touch;
Hers was the prettiest prattle, it often
moved me to tears,

Hers was the gratefullest heart I have
found in a child of her years—
Nay you remember our Emmie; you
used to send her the flowers;

How she would smile at 'em, play
with 'em, talk to 'em hours
after hours!

They that can wander at will where
the works of the Lord are
reveal'd

Little guess what joy can be got from
a cowslip out of the field;

Flowers to these 'spirits in prison'
are all they can know of the
spring,

They freshen and sweeten the wards
like the waft of an Angel's
wing;

And she lay with a flower in one hand
and her thin hands crost on her
breast—

Wan, but as pretty as heart can
desire, and we thought her at
rest,

Quietly sleeping—so quiet, our doctor
said 'Poor little dear,

Nurse, I must do it to-morrow; she'll
never live thro' it, I fear.'

v.

I walk'd with our kindly old doctor as
far as the head of the stair,

Then I return'd to the ward; the
child didn't see I was there.

vi.

Never since I was nurse, had I been
so grieved and so vex't!

Emmie had heard him. Softly she
call'd from her cot to the next,

'He says I shall never live thro' it, O
Annie, what shall I do?'

Aggie consider'd. 'If I,' said the
wise little Annie, 'was you,
I should cry to the dear Lord Jesus to
help me, for, Emmie, you
see,

It's all in the picture there: "Little
children should come to
me."'

(Meaning the print that you gave us, I
find that it always can please

Our children, the dear Lord Jesus
with children about his knees.)

'Yes, and I will,' said Emmie, 'but
then if I call to the Lord,

How should he know that it's me?
such a lot of beds in the ward!'

That was a puzzle for Annie. Again
she consider'd and said:

'Emmie, you put out your arms, and
you leave 'em outside on the
bed—

The Lord has so *much* to see to!
but, Emmie, you tell it him
plain,

It's the little girl with her arms lying
out on the counterpane.'

vii.

I had sat three nights by the child—I
could not watch her for four—

My brain had begun to reel—I felt I
could do it no more.

That was my sleeping-night, but I
thought that it never would
pass.

There was a thunderclap once, and a
clatter of hail on the glass,

And there was a phantom cry that I
heard as I tost about,

The motherless bleat of a lamb in the
storm and the darkness with-
out;

My sleep was broken besides with
dreams of the dreadful knife

And fears for our delicate Emmie
who scarce would escape with
her life;

Then in the gray of the morning it
seem'd she stood by me and
smiled,

And the doctor came at his hour, and
we went to see the child.

VIII.

He had brought his ghastly tools: we
believed her asleep again—
Her dear, long, lean, little arms lying
out on the counterpane;
Say that His day is done! Ah why
should we care what they say?
The Lord of the children had heard
her, and Emmie had past away.

DEDICATORY POEM TO THE
PRINCESS ALICE.

DEAD PRINCESS, living Power, if that,
which lived
True life, live on—and if the fatal
kiss,
Born of true life and love, divorce
thee not
From earthly love and life—if what
we call
The spirit flash not all at once from
out
This shadow into Substance—then
perhaps
The mellow'd murmur of the people's
praise
From thine own State, and all our
breadth of realm,
Where Love and Longing dress thy
deeds in light,
Ascends to thee; and this March
morn that sees
Thy Soldier-brother's bridal orange-
bloom
Break thro' the yews and cypress of
thy grave,
And thine Imperial mother smile
again,
May send one ray to thee! and who
can tell—
Thou—England's England-loving
daughter—thou
Dying so English thou wouldst have
her flag
Borne on thy coffin—where is he can
swear
But that some broken gleam from our
poor earth

May touch thee, while remembering
thee, I lay
At thy pale feet this ballad of the
deeds
Of England, and her banner in the
East?

THE DEFENCE OF
LUCKNOW.

I.

BANNER of England, not for a season,
O banner of Britain, hast thou
Floated in conquering battle or flap to
the battle-cry!
Never with mightier glory than when
we had rear'd thee on high
Flying at top of the roofs in the ghastly
siege of Lucknow—
Shot thro' the staff or the halyard, but
ever we raised thee anew,
And ever upon the topmost roof our
banner of England blew.

II.

Frail were the works that defended
the hold that we held with our
lives—
Women and children among us, God
help them, our children and
wives!
Hold it we might—and for fifteen days
or for twenty at most.
'Never surrender, I charge you, but
every man die at his post!'
Voice of the dead whom we loved, our
Lawrence the best of the brave:
Cold were his brows when we kiss'd
him—we laid him that night in
his grave.
'Every man die at his post!' and there
hail'd on our houses and halls
Death from their rifle-bullets, and
death from their cannon-balls,
Death in our innermost chamber, and
death at our slight barricade,
Death while we stood with the musket,
and death while we stooped to the
spade,

Death to the dying, and wounds to the wounded, for often there fell,
Striking the hospital wall, crashing thro' it, their shot and their shell,

Death—for their spies were among us, their marksmen were told of our best,

So that the brute bullet broke thro' the brain that could think for the rest;

Bullets would sing by our foreheads, and bullets would rain at our feet—

Fire from ten thousand at once of the rebels that girdled us round—

Death at the glimpse of a finger from over the breadth of a street,

Death from the heights of the mosque and the palace, and death in the ground!

Mine? yes, a mine! Countermine! down, down! and creep thro' the hold!

Keep the revolver in hand! you can hear him—the murderous mole!

Quiet, ah! quiet—wait till the point of the pickaxe be thro'!

Click with the pick, coming nearer and nearer again than before—

Now let it speak, and you fire, and the dark pioneer is no more;

And ever upon the topmost roof our banner of England blew!

III.

Ay, but the foe sprung his mine many times, and it chanced on a day

Soon as the blast of that underground thunderclap echo'd away,

Dark thro' the smoke and the sulphur like so many fiends in their hell—

Cannon-shot, musket-shot, volley on volley, and yell upon yell—

Fiercely on all the defences our myriad enemy fell.

What have they done? where is it? Out yonder. Guard the Redan!

Storm at the Water-gate! storm at the Bailey-gate! storm, and it ran

Surging and swaying all round us, as ocean on every side

Plunges and heaves at a bank that is daily devour'd by the tide—

So many thousands that if they be bold enough, who shall escape?

Kill or be kill'd, live or die, they shall know we are soldiers and men!

Ready! take aim at their leaders—their masses are gapp'd with our grape—

Backward they reel like the wave, like the wave flinging forward again,

Flying and foil'd at the last by the handful they could not subdue;

And ever upon the topmost roof our banner of England blew.

IV.

Handful of men as we were, we were English in heart and in limb,

Strong with the strength of the race to command, to obey, to endure,

Each of us fought as if hope for the garrison hung but on him;

Still—could we watch at all points? we were every day fewer and fewer.

There was a whisper among us, but only a whisper that past:

'Children and wives—if the tigers leap into the fold unawares—

Every man die at his post—and the foe may outlive us at last—

Better to fall by the hands that they love, than to fall into theirs!'

Roar upon roar in a moment two mines by the enemy sprung

Clove into perilous chasms our walls and our poor palisades.

Rifeman, true is your heart, but be sure that your hand be as true!

Sharp is the fire of assault, better aimed are your flank fusillades—

Twice do we hurl them to earth from the ladders to which they had clung,

Twice from the ditch where they shelter we drive them with hand-grenades;

And ever upon the topmost roof our banner of England blew.

V.

Then on another wild morning another
wild earthquake out-tore
Clean from our lines of defence ten or
twelve good paces or more.
Rifleman, high on the roof, hidden
there from the light of the sun—
One has leapt up on the breach, crying
out: 'Follow me, follow
me!'—
Mark him—he falls! then another,
and *him* too, and down goes he.
Had they been bold enough then, who
can tell but the traitors had
won?
Boardings and rafters and doors—an
embrasure! make way for the
gun!
Now double-charge it with grape! It
is charged and we fire, and they
run.
Praise to our Indian brothers, and let
the dark face have his due!
Thanks to the kindly dark faces who
fought with us, faithful and few,
Fought with the bravest among us, and
drove them, and smote them,
and slew,
That ever upon the topmost roof our
banner in India blew.

VI.

Men will forget what we suffer and
not what we do. We can
fight!
But to be soldier all day and be senti-
nel all thro' the night—
Ever the mine and assault, our sallies,
their lying alarms,
Bugles and drums in the darkness, and
shoutings and soundings to
arms,
Ever the labor of fifty that had to be
done by five,
Ever the marvel among us that one
should be left alive,
Ever the day with its traitorous death
from the loopholes around, ●
Ever the night with its coffinless
corpse to be laid in the ground,
Heat like the mouth of a hell, or a
deluge of cataract skies,

Stench of old offal decaying, and
infinite torment of flies,
Thoughts of the breezes of May blow-
ing over an English field,
Cholera, scurvy, and fever, the wound
that *would* not be heal'd,
Lopping away of the limb by the piti-
ful-pitiless knife,—
Torture and trouble in vain,—for it
never could save us a life.
Valor of delicate women who tended
the hospital bed,
Horror of women in travail among
the dying and dead,
Grief for our perishing children, and
never a moment for grief,
Toil and ineffable weariness, faltering
hopes of relief,
Havelock baffled, or beaten, or butch-
er'd for all that we knew—
Then day and night, day and night,
coming down on the still-shat-
ter'd walls
Millions of musket-bullets, and thou-
sands of cannon-balls—
But ever upon the topmost roof our
banner of England blew.

VII.

Hark cannonade, fusillade! is it true
what was told by the scout,
Outram and Havelock breaking their
way through the fell mutineers?
Surely the pibroch of Europe is ring-
ing again in our ears!
All on a sudden the garrison utter a
jubilant shout,
Havelock's glorious Highlanders an-
swer with conquering cheers,
Sick from the hospital echo them,
women and children come out,
Blessing the wholesome white faces
of Havelock's good fusileers,
Kissing the war-harden'd hand of the
Highlander wet with their
tears!
Dance to the pibroch!—saved! we
are saved!—is it you? is it
you?
Saved by the valor of Havelock,
saved by the blessing of
Heaven!

'Hold it for fifteen days!' we have
held it for eighty-seven!
And ever aloft on the palace roof the
old banner of England blew.

SIR JOHN OLDCASTLE, LORD
COBHAM.

(IN WALES.)

My friend should meet me somewhere
hereabout
To take me to that hiding in the hills.

I have broke their cage, no gilded
one, I trow—
I read no more the prisoner's mute
wail
Scribbled or carved upon the pitiless
stone;
I find hard rocks, hard life, hard
cheer, or none,
For I am emptier than a friar's
brains;
But God is with me in this wilderness,
These wet black passes and foam-
churning chasms—
And God's free air, and hope of better
things.

I would I knew their speech; not
now to glean,
Not now—I hope to do it—some scat-
ter'd ears,
Some ears for Christ in this wild field
of Wales—
But, bread, merely for bread. This
tongue that wagg'd
They said with such heretical arro-
gance
Against the proud archbishop Arun-
del—
So much God's cause was fluent in it
—is here
But as a Latin Bible to the crowd;
'Bara!'—what use? The Shepherd,
when I speak,
Vailing a sudden eyelid with his hard
'Dim Saesneg' passes, wroth at
things of old—

No fault of mine. Had he God's
word in Welsh
He might be kindlier: happily come
the day!

Not least art thou, thou little Beth-
lehem
In Judah, for in thee the Lord was
born;
Nor thou in Britain, little Lutter-
worth,
Least, for in thee the word was born
again.

Heaven-sweet Evangel, ever-living
word,
Who whilome spake to the South in
Greek
About the soft Mediterranean shores,
And then in Latin to the Latin crowd,
As good need was—thou hast come
to talk our isle.
Hereafter thou, fulfilling Pentecost,
Must learn to use the tongues of all
the world.
Yet art thou thine own witness that
thou bringest,
Not peace, a sword, a fire.

What did he say,
My frighted Wiclif-preacher whom I
crost
In flying hither? that one night a
crowd
Throng'd the waste field about the
city gates:
The king was on them suddenly with
a host.
Why there? they came to hear their
preacher. Then
Some cried on Cobham, on the good
Lord Cobham;
Ay, for they love me! but the king—
nor voice
Nor finger raised against him—took
and hang'd,
Took, hang'd and burnt—how many
—thirty-nine—
Call'd it rebellion—hang'd, poor
friends, as rebels
And burn'd alive as heretics! for your
Priest
Labels—to take the king along with
him—

All heresy, treason: but to call men
traitors
May make men traitors.
Rose of Lancaster,
Red in thy birth, redder with house-
hold war,
Now reddest with the blood of holy
men,
Redder to be, red rose of Lancaster—
If somewhere in the North, as Rumor
sang
Fluttering the hawks of this crown-
lusting line—
By firth and loch thy silver sister
grow,¹
That were my rose, there my alle-
giance due.
Self-starved, they say—nay, murder'd,
doubtless dead.
So to this king I cleaved: my friend
was he,
Once my fast friend: I would have
given my life
To help his own from scathe, a thou-
sand lives
To save his soul. 'He might have
come to learn
Our Wiclif's learning: but the
worldly Priests
Who fear the king's hard common-
sense should find
What rotten piles uphold their ma-
son-work,
Urge him to foreign war. O had he
will'd
I might have stricken a lusty stroke
for him,
But he would not; far liever led my
friend
Back to the pure and universal church,
But he would not: whether that heir-
less flaw
In his throne's title make him feel so
frail,
He leans on Antichrist; or that his
mind,
So quick, so capable in soldiership,
In matters of the faith, alas the while!
More worth than all the kingdoms of
this world,
Runs in the rut, a coward to the Priest.

¹ Richard II.

Burnt—good Sir Roger Acton, my
dear friend!
Burnt too, my faithful preacher, Bever-
ley!
Lord give thou power to thy two wit-
nesses!
Lest the false faith make merry over
them!
Two—nay but thirty-nine have risen
and stand,
Dark with the smoke of human sacri-
fice,
Before thy light, and cry continu-
ally—
Cry—against whom?
Him, who should bear the sword
(Of Justice—what! the kingly, kindly
boy;
Who took the world so easily hereto-
fore,
My boon companion, tavern-fellow—
him.
Who gibed and japed—in many a
merry tale
That shook our sides—at Pardoners,
Summoners,
Friars, absolution-sellers, monkeries
And nunneries, when the wild hour
and the wine
Had set the wits aflame.
Harry of Monmouth,
Or Amurath of the East?
Better to sink
Thy fleurs-de-lys in slime again, and
fling
Thy royalty back into the riotous fits
Of wine and harlotry—thy shame, and
mine,
Thy comrade—than to persecute the
Lord,
And play the Saul that never will be
Paul.

Burnt, burnt! and while this mitred
Arundel
Dooms our unlicensed preacher to the
flame,
The mitre-sanction'd harlot draws his
clerks
Into the suburb—their hard celibacy,
Sworn to be veriest ice of pureness,
molten
Into adulterous living, or such crime

As holy Paul—a shame to speak of
 them—
 Among the heathen—

Sanctuary granted
 To bandit, thief, assassin—yea to him
 Who hacks his mother's throat—de-
 nied to him,
 Who finds the Saviour in his mother
 tongue.

The Gospel, the Priest's pearl, flung
 down to swine—

The swine, lay-men, lay-women, who
 will come,

God willing, to outlearn the filthy
 friar.

Ah rather, Lord, than that thy Gospel,
 meant

To course and range thro' all the
 world, should be
 Tether'd to these dead pillars of the
 Church—

Rather than so, if thou wilt have it so,
 Burst vein, snap sinew, and crack
 heart, and life

Pass in the fire of Babylon! but how
 long,

O Lord, how long!

My friend should meet me here.
 Here is the copse, the fountain and—a
 Cross!

To thee, dead wood, I bow not head
 nor knees.

Rather to thee, green boscaige, work
 of God,

Black holly, and white-flower'd way-
 faring tree!

Rather to thee, thou living water,
 drawn

By this good Wiclif mountain down
 from heaven,

And speaking clearly in thy native
 tongue—

No Latin—He that thirsteth, come
 and drink!

Eh! how I anger'd Arundel asking
 me

To worship Holy Cross! I spread
 mine arms,

God's work, I said, a cross of flesh
 and blood

And holier. That was heresy. (My
 good friend

By this time should be with me.)
 'Images?'

'Bury them as God's truer images
 Are daily buried.' 'Heresy.—Pen-
 ance?' 'Fast,

Hairshirt and scourge—nay, let a
 man repent,

Do penance in his heart, God hears
 him.' 'Heresy—

Not shriven, not saved?' 'What
 profits an ill Priest

Between me and my God? I would
 not spurn

Good counsel of good friends, but
 shrive myself

No, not to an Apostle.' 'Heresy.'
 (My friend is long in coming.) 'Pil-
 grimages?

'Drink, bagpipes, revelling, devil's-
 dances, vice.

The poor man's money gone to fat the
 friar.

Who reads of begging saints in Script-
 ure?' 'Heresy'—

(Hath he been here—not found me—
 gone again?

Have I mislearnt our place of meet-
 ing?) 'Bread—

Bread left after the blessing?' how
 they stared

That was their main test-question—
 glared at me!

'He veil'd Himself in flesh, and now
 He veils

His flesh in bread, body and bread
 together.'

Then rose the howl of all the cassock'd
 wolves,

'No bread, no bread. God's body!'
 Archbishop, Bishop,

Priors, Canons, Friars, bellringers,
 Parish-clerks—

'No bread, no bread!'—'Authority
 of the Church,

Power of the keys!'—Then I, God
 help me, I

So mock'd, so spurn'd, so baited two
 whole days—

I lost myself and fell from evenness,
 And rail'd at all the Popes, that ever
 since

Sylvester shed the venom of world-
 wealth

Into the church, had only prov'n themselves

Poisoners, murderers. Well—God pardon all—

Me, them, and all the world—yea, that proud Priest,

That mock-meek mouth of utter Antichrist,

That traitor to King Richard and the truth,

Who rose and doom'd me to the fire. Amen!

Nay, I can burn, so that the Lord of life

Be by me in my death.

Those three! the fourth Was like the Son of God! Not burnt were they.

On *them* the smell of burning had not past.

That was a miracle to convert the king. These Pharisees, this Caiaphas-Arundenel

What miracle could turn? *He* here again,

He thwarting their traditions of Himself,

He would be found a heretic to Himself,

And doom'd to burn alive.

So, caught, I burn. Burn? heathen men have borne as much as this.

For freedom, or the sake of those they loved,

Or some less cause, some cause far less than mine;

For every other cause is less than mine.

The moth will singe her wings, and singed return,

Her love of light quenching her fear of pain—

How now, my soul, we do not heed the fire?

Faint-hearted? tut!—faint-stomach'd! faint as I am,

God willing, I will burn for Him.

Who comes? A thousand marks are set upon my head.

Friend?—foe perhaps—a tussle for it then

Nay, but my friend. Thou art so well disguised,

I knew thee not. Hast thou brought bread with thee?

I have not broken bread for fifty hours.

None? I am damn'd already by the Priest

For holding there was bread where bread was none—

No bread. My friends await me yonder? Yes.

Lead on then. *Up* the mountain? Is it far?

Not far. Climb first and reach me down thy hand.

I am not like to die for lack of bread, For I must live to testify by fire.¹

COLUMBUS.

CHAINS, my good lord: in your raised brows I read

Some wonder at our chamber ornaments.

We brought this iron from our isles of gold.

Does the king know you deign to visit him

Whom once he rose from off his throne to greet

Before his people, like his brother king?

I saw your face that morning in the crowd.

At Barcelona—tho' you were not then

So bearded. Yes. The city deck'd herself

To meet me, roar'd my name; the king, the queen

Bad me be seated, speak, and tell them all

The story of my voyage, and while I spoke

The crowd's roar fell as at the 'Peace, be still!'

¹ He was burnt on Christmas Day, 1417.

And when I ceased to speak, the
king, the queen,
Sank from their thrones, and melted
into tears,
And knelt, and lifted hand and heart
and voice
In praise to God who led me thro' the
waste.
And then the great 'Laudamus' rose
to heaven.

Chains for the Admiral of the
Ocean! chains
For him who gave a new heaven, a
new earth,
As holy John had prophesied of me,
Gave glory and more empire to the
kings
Of Spain than all their battles! chains
for him
Who push'd his prow into the setting
sun,
And made West East, and sail'd the
Dragon's mouth,
And came upon the Mountain of the
World,
And saw the rivers roll from Para-
dise!

Chains! we are Admirals of the
Ocean, we,
We and our sons for ever. Ferdi-
nand
Hath sign'd it and our Holy Catholic
queen—
Of the Ocean—of the Indies—Ad-
mirals we—
Our title, which we never mean to
yield,
Our guerdon not alone for what we
did,
But our amends for all we might have
done—
The vast occasion of our stronger
life—
Eighteen long years of waste, seven
in your Spain,
Lost, showing courts and kings a
truth the babe
Will suck in with his milk hereafter—
earth
A sphere.

Were *you* at Salamanca? No.
We fronted there the learning of all
Spain.

All their cosmogonies, their astron-
omies:

Guess-work *they* guess'd it, but the
golden guess
Is morning-star to the full round of
truth.

No guess-work! I was certain of my
goal;

Some thought it heresy, but that
would not hold.

King David call'd the heavens a hide,
a tent

Spread over earth, and so this earth
was flat:

Some cited old Lactantius: could it
be

That trees grew downward, rain fell
upward, men

Walk'd like the fly on ceilings? and
besides,

The great Augustine wrote that none
could breathe

Within the zone of heat; so might
there be

Two Adams, two mankind, and that
was clean

Against God's word: thus was I
beaten back,

And chiefly to my sorrow by the
Church,

And thought to turn my face from
Spain, appeal

Once more to France or England; but
our Queen

Recall'd me, for at last their High-
nesses

Were half-assured this earth might be
a sphere.

All glory to the all-blessed Trinity,
All glory to the mother of our Lord,

And Holy Church, from whom I
never swerved

Not even by one hair's-breadth of
heresy,

I have accomplish'd what I came to
do.

Not yet—not all—last night a
dream—I sail'd

On my first voyage, harass'd by the
frights
Of my first crew, their curses and
their groans.
The great flame-banner borne by Ten-
eriffe,
The compass, like an old friend false
at last
In our most need, appall'd them, and
the wind
Still westward, and the weedy seas—
at length
The landbird, and the branch with
berries on it,
The carven staff—and last the light,
the light
On Guanahani! but I changed the
name;
San Salvador I call'd it; and the
light
Grew as I gazed, and brought out a
broad sky
Of dawning over—not those alien
palms,
The marvel of that fair new nature—
not
That Indian isle, but our most an-
cient East
Moriah with Jerusalem; and I saw
The glory of the Lord flash up, and
beat
Thro' all the homely town from jas-
per, sapphire,
Chalcedony, emerald, sardonyx, sar-
dius,
Chrysolite, beryl, topaz, chrysoprase,
Jacynth, and amethyst—and those
twelve gates,
Pearl—and I woke, and thought—
death—I shall die—
I am written in the Lamb's own
Book of Life
To walk within the glory of the Lord
Sunless and moonless, utter light—
but no!
The Lord had sent this bright, strange
dream to me
To mind me of the secret vow I
made
When Spain was waging war against
the Moor—
I strove myself with Spain against
the Moor.

There came two voices from the
Sepulchre,
Two friars crying that if Spain should
oust
The Moslem from her limit, he, the
fierce
Soldan of Egypt, would break down
and raze
The blessed tomb of Christ; whereon
I vow'd
That, if our Princes harken'd to my
prayer,
Whatever wealth I brought from that
new world
Should, in this old, be consecrate to
lead
A new crusade against the Saracen,
And free the Holy Sepulchre from
thrall.

Gold? I had brought your Princes
gold enough
If left alone! Being but a Geno-
vese,
I am handled worse than had I been a
Moor,
And breach'd the belting wall of
Cambain,
And given the Great Khan's palaces
to the Moor,
Or clutch'd the sacred crown of Pres-
ter John,
And cast it to the Moor: but *had* I
brought
From Solomon's now-recover'd Ophir
all
The gold that Solomon's navies car-
ried home,
Would that have gilded *me*? Blue
blood of Spain,
Tho' quartering your own royal arms
of Spain,
I have not: blue blood and black
blood of Spain,
The noble and the convict of Castile,
Howl'd me from Hispaniola; for you
know
The flies at home, that ever swarm
about
And cloud the highest heads, and
murmur down
Truth in the distance—these out-
buzz'd me so

That even our prudent king, our righteous queen—
 I pray'd them being so calumniated
 They would commission one of weight
 and worth
 To judge between my slander'd self
 and me—
 Fonseca my main enemy at their
 court,
 They sent me out *his* tool, Bovadilla,
 one
 As ignorant and impolitic as a beast—
 Blockish irreverence, brainless greed
 —who sack'd
 My dwelling, seized upon my papers,
 loosed
 My captives, feed the rebels of the
 crown,
 Sold the crown-farms for all but nothing,
 gave
 All but free leave for all to work the
 mines,
 Drove me and my good brothers
 home in chains,
 And gathering ruthless gold—a single
 piece
 Weigh'd nigh four thousand Castillanos—so
 They tell me—weigh'd him down into
 the abysm—
 The hurricane of the latitude on him
 fell,
 The seas of our discovering over-rolled
 Him and his gold; the frail caravel,
 With what was mine, came happily
 to the shore.
There was a glimmering of God's
 hand.

And God
 Hath more than glimmer'd on me. O
 my lord,
 I swear to you I heard his voice between
 The thunders in the black Veragua
 nights,
 'O soul of little faith, slow to believe!
 Have I not been about thee from thy
 birth?
 Given thee the keys of the great
 Ocean-sea?
 Set thee in light till time shall be no
 more?

Is it I who have deceived thee or the
 world?
 Endure! thou hast done so well for
 men, that men
 Cry out against thee: was it otherwise
 With mine own Son?'

And more than once in days
 Of doubt and cloud and storm, when
 drowning hope
 Sank all but out of sight, I heard his
 voice,
 'Be not cast down. I lead thee by
 the hand,
 Fear not.' And I shall hear his voice
 again—
 I know that he has led me all my life,
 I am not yet too old to work his will—
 His voice again.

Still for all that, my lord,
 I lying here bedridden and alone,
 Cast off, put by, scouted by court and
 king—
 The first discoverer starves—his followers, all
 Flower into fortune—our world's way
 —and I,
 Without a roof that I can call mine
 own,
 With scarce a coin to buy a meal
 withal,
 And seeing what a door for scoundrel
 scum
 I open'd to the West, thro' which the
 lust,
 Villany, violence, avarice, of your
 Spain
 Pour'd in on all those happy naked
 isles—
 Their kindly native princes slain or
 slaved,
 Their wives and children Spanish
 concubines,
 Their innocent hospitalities quench'd
 in blood,
 Some dead of hunger, some beneath
 the scourge,
 Some over-labor'd, some by their own
 hands,—
 Yea, the dear mothers, crazing Nature,
 kill

Their babies at the breast for hate of Spain—
 Ah God, the harmless people whom we found
 In Hispaniola's island-Paradise!
 Who took us for the very Gods from Heaven,
 And we have sent them very fiends from Hell;
 And I myself, myself not blameless, I
 Could sometimes wish I had never led the way.

Only the ghost of our great Catholic Queen
 Smiles on me, saying, 'Be thou comforted!
 This creedless people will be brought to Christ
 And own the holy governance of Rome.'

But who could dream that we, who bore the Cross
 Thither, were excommunicated there,
 For curbing crimes that scandalized the Cross,
 By him, the Catalanian Minorite,
 Rome's Vicar in our Indies? who believe
 These hard memorials of our truth to Spain
 Clung closer to us for a longer term
 Than any friend of ours at Court? and yet
 Pardon—too harsh, unjust. I am rack'd with pains.

You see that I have hung them by my bed,
 And I will have them buried in my grave.

Sir, in that flight of ages which are God's
 Own voice to justify the dead—perchance
 Spain once the most chivalric race on earth,
 Spain then the mightiest, wealthiest realm on earth,
 So made by me, may seek to unbury me,

To lay me in some shrine of this old Spain,
 Or in that vaster Spain I leave to Spain.
 Then some one standing by my grave will say,
 'Behold the bones of Christopher Colón'—
 'Ay, but the chains, what do they mean—the chains?'—
 I sorrow for that kindly child of Spain
 Who then will have to answer, 'These same chains
 Bound these same bones back thro' the Atlantic sea,
 Which he unchain'd for all the world to come.'

O Queen of Heaven who seest the souls in Hell
 And purgatory, I suffer all as much
 As they do—for the moment. Stay, my son
 Is here anon: my son will speak for me
 Ablier than I can in these spasms that grind
 Bone against bone. You will not. One last word.

You move about the Court, I pray you tell
 King Ferdinand who plays with me, that one,
 Whose life has been no play with him and his
 Hidalgos—shipwrecks, famines, fevers, fights,
 Mutinies, treacheries—wink'd at, and condoned—
 That I am loyal to him till the death,
 And ready—tho' our Holy Catholic Queen,
 Who fain had pledged her jewels on my first voyage,
 Whose hope was mine to spread the Catholic faith,
 Who wept with me when I return'd in chains,
 Who sits beside the blessed Virgin now,
 To whom I send my prayer by night and day—

She is gone—but you will tell the
 King, that I,
 Rack'd as I am with gout, and
 wrench'd with pains
 Gain'd in the service of His High-
 ness, yet
 Am ready to sail forth on one last
 voyage,
 And readier, if the King would hear,
 to lead
 One last crusade against the Saracen,
 And save the Holy Sepulchre from
 thrall.

Going? I am old and slighted:
 you have dared
 Somewhat perhaps in coming? my
 poor thanks!
 I am but an alien and a Genovese.

THE VOYAGE OF MAELDUNE.

(FOUNDED ON AN IRISH LEGEND.
 A. D. 700.)

I.

I WAS the chief of the race—he had
 stricken my father dead—
 But I gather'd my fellows together, I
 swore I would strike off his
 head.
 Each of them look'd like a king, and
 was noble in birth as in worth,
 And each of them boasted he sprang
 from the oldest race upon
 earth.
 Each was as brave in the fight as the
 bravest hero of song,
 And each of them liefer had died than
 have done one another a wrong.
He lived on an isle in the ocean—we
 sail'd on a Friday morn—
 He that had slain my father the day
 before I was born.

II.

And we came to the isle in the ocean,
 and there on the shore was he.
 But a sudden blast blew us out and
 away thro' a boundless sea.

III.

And we came to the Silent Isle that
 we never had touch'd at before,
 Where a silent ocean always broke on
 a silent shore,
 And the brooks glitter'd on in the
 light without sound, and the
 long waterfalls
 Pour'd in a thunderless plunge to the
 base of the mountain walls,
 And the poplar and cypress unshaken
 by storm flourish'd up beyond
 sight,
 And the pine shot aloft from the crag
 to an unbelievable height,
 And high in the heaven above it there
 flicker'd a songless lark,
 And the cock couldn't crow, and the
 bull couldn't low, and the dog
 couldn't bark.
 And round it we went, and thro' it,
 but never a murmur, a breath—
 It was all of it fair as life, it was all
 of it quiet as death,
 And we hated the beautiful Isle, for
 whenever we strove to speak
 Our voices were thinner and tainter
 than any flittermouse-shriek;
 And the men that were mighty of
 tongue and could raise such a
 battle-cry
 That a hundred who heard it would
 rush on a thousand lances and
 die—
 O they to be dumb'd by the charm!—
 so fluster'd with anger were
 they
 They almost fell on each other; but
 after we sail'd away.

IV.

And we came to the Isle of Shouting,
 we landed, a score of wild birds
 Cried from the topmost summit with
 human voices and words;
 Once in an hour they cried, and when-
 ever their voices peal'd
 The steer fell down at the plow and
 the harvest died from the field,
 And the men dropt dead in the val-
 leys and half of the cattle went
 lame,

And the roof sank in on the hearth,
and the dwelling broke into
flame ;
And the shouting of these wild birds
ran into the hearts of my
crew,
Till they shouted along with the
shouting and seized one another
and slew ;
But I drew them the one from the
other ; I saw that we could not
stay,
And we left the dead to the birds and
we sail'd with our wounded
away.

V.

And we came to the Isle of Flowers :
their breath met us out on the
seas,
For the Spring and the middle Sum-
mer sat each on the lap of the
breeze ;
And the red passion-flower to the
cliffs, and the dark-blue clemat-
is, clung,
And starr'd with a myriad blossom
the long convolvulus hung ;
And the topmost spire of the mountain
was lilies in lieu of snow,
And the lilies like glaciers winded
down, running out below
Thro' the fire of the tulip and poppy,
the blaze of gorse, and the
blush
Of millions of roses that sprang
without leaf or a thorn from
the bush ;
And the whole isle-side flashing down
from the peak without ever a
tree
Swept like a torrent of gems from the
sky to the blue of the sea ;
And we roll'd upon capes of crocus
and vaunted our kith and our
kin,
And we wallow'd in beds of lilies, and
chanted the triumph of Finn,
Till each like a golden image was
pollen'd from head to feet
And each was as dry as a cricket, with
thirst in the middle-day heat.

Blossom and blossom, and promise of
blossom, but never a fruit !
And we hated the Flowering Isle, as
we hated the isle that was
mute,
And we tore up the flowers by the
million and flung them in bight
and bay,
And we left but a naked rock, and in
anger we sail'd away.

VI.

And we came to the Isle of Fruits :
all round from the cliffs and
the capes,
Purple or amber, dangled a hundred
fathom of grapes,
And the warm melon lay like a little
sun on the tawny sand,
And the fig ran up from the beach
and rioted over the land,
And the mountain arose like a jewell'd
throne thro' the fragrant air,
Glowing with all-color'd plums and
with golden masses of pear,
And the crimson and scarlet of berries
that flamed upon bine and
vine,
But in every berry and fruit was the
poisonous pleasure of wine ;
And the peak of the mountain was
apples, the hugest that ever
were seen,
And they prest, as they grew, on each
other, with hardly a leaflet
between,
And all of them redder than rosiest
health or than utterest shame,
And setting, when Even descended,
the very sunset aflame ;
And we stay'd three days, and we
gorged and we madden'd, till
every one drew
His sword on his fellow to slay him,
and ever they struck and they
slew ;
And myself, I had eaten but sparingly,
and fought till I sunder'd the
fray,
Then I bad them remember my fath-
er's death, and we sail'd
away.

VII.

And we came to the Isle of Fire: we
 were lured by the light from
 afar,
 For the peak sent up one league of
 fire to the Northern Star;
 Lured by the glare and the glare, but
 scarcely could stand upright,
 For the whole isle shudder'd and
 shook like a man in a mortal
 affright;
 We were giddy besides with the
 fruits we had gorged, and so
 crazed that at last
 There were some leap'd into the fire;
 and away we sail'd, and we
 past
 Over that undersea isle, where the
 water is clearer than air:
 Down we look'd: what a garden! O
 bliss, what a Paradise there!
 Towers of a happier time, low down
 in a rainbow deep
 Silent palaces, quiet fields of eternal
 sleep!
 And three of the gentlest and best of
 my people, whate'er I could
 say,
 Plunged head down in the sea, and the
 Paradise trembled away.

VIII.

And we came to the Bounteous Isle,
 where the heavens lean low on
 the land,
 And ever at dawn from the cloud
 glitter'd o'er us a sunbright
 hand,
 Then it open'd and dropt at the side
 of each man, as he rose from
 his rest,
 Bread enough for his need till the
 laborless day dipt under the
 West;
 And we wander'd about it and thro'
 it. O never was time so good!
 And we sang of the triumphs of Finn,
 and the boast of our ancient
 blood,
 And we gazed at the wandering wave
 as we sat by the gurgle of
 springs,

And we chanted the songs of the
 Bards and the glories of fairy
 kings;
 But at length we began to be weary,
 to sigh, and to stretch and
 yawn,
 Till we hated the Bounteous Isle and
 the sunbright hand of the dawn,
 For there was not an enemy near, but
 the whole green Isle was our
 own,
 And we took to playing at ball, and
 we took to throwing the stone,
 And we took to playing at battle, but
 that was a perilous play,
 For the passion of battle was in us,
 we slew and we sail'd away.

IX.

And we past to the Isle of Witches
 and heard their musical cry—
 'Come to us, O come, come' in the
 stormy red of a sky
 Dashing the fires and the shadows of
 dawn on the beautiful shapes,
 For a wild witch naked as heaven
 stood on each of the loftiest
 capes,
 And a hundred ranged on the rock
 like white sea-birds in a row,
 And a hundred gamboll'd and
 pranced on the wrecks in the
 sand below,
 And a hundred splash'd from the
 ledges, and bosom'd the burst
 of the spray,
 But I knew we should fall on each
 other, and hastily sail'd away.

X.

And we came in an evil time to the
 Isle of the Double Towers,
 One was of smooth-cut stone, one
 carved all over with flowers,
 But an earthquake always moved in
 the hollows under the dells,
 And they shock'd on each other and
 butted each other with clash-
 ing of bells,
 And the daws flew out of the Towers
 and jangled and wrangled in
 vain,

And the clash and boom of the bells
rang into the heart and the
brain,
Till the passion of battle was on us,
and all took sides with the
Towers,
There were some for the clean-cut
stone, there were more for the
carven flowers.
And the wrathful thunder of God
peal'd over us all the day,
For the one half slew the other, and
after we sail'd away.

XI.

And we came to the Isle of a Saint
who had sail'd with St. Bren-
dan of yore,
He had lived ever since on the Isle
and his winters were fifteen
score,
And his voice was low as from other
worlds, and his eyes were
sweet,
And his white hair sank to his heels
and his white beard fell to his
feet,
And he spake to me, 'O Maeldune,
let be this purpose of thine!
Remember the words of the Lord
when he told us "Vengeance is
mine!"
His fathers have slain thy fathers in
war or in single strife,
Thy fathers have slain his fathers,
each taken a life for a life,
Thy father had slain his father, how
long shall the murder last?
Go back to the Isle of Finn and suf-
fer the Past to be Past.'
And we kiss'd the fringe of his beard
and we pray'd as we heard him
prayer,
And the Holy man he assoil'd us, and
sadly we sail'd away.

XII.

And we came to the Isle we were
blown from, and there on the
shore was he,
The man that had slain my father. I
saw him and let him be.

O weary was I of the travel, the
trouble, the strife and the sin,
When I landed again, with a tithe of
my men, on the Isle of Finn.

DE PROFUNDIS:

THE TWO GREETINGS.

I.

OUT of the deep, my child, out of the
deep,
Where all that was to be, in all that
was,
Whirl'd for a million æons thro' the
vast
Waste dawn of multitudinous-eddy-
ing light—
Out of the deep, my child, out of the
deep,
Thro' all this changing world of
changeless law,
And every phase of ever-heightening
life,
And nine long months of antenatal
gloom,
With this last moon, this crescent—
her dark orb
Touch'd with earth's light—thou
comest, darling boy;
Our own; a babe in lineament and
limb
Perfect, and prophet of the perfect
man;
Whose face and form are hers and
mine in one,
Indissolubly married like our love;
Live, and be happy in thyself, and
serve
This mortal race thy kin so well, that
men
May bless thee as we bless thee, O
young life
Breaking with laughter from the
dark; and may
The fated channel where thy motion
lives
Be prosperously shaped, and sway thy
course

Along the years of haste and random
youth
Unshatter'd; then full-current thro'
full man;
And last in kindly curves, with gen-
tlest fall,
By quiet fields, a slowly-dying power,
To that last deep where we and thou
are still.

II.

I.

OUT of the deep, my child, out of the
deep,
From that great deep, before our
world begins,
Whereon the Spirit of God moves as
he will—
Out of the deep, my child, out of the
deep,
From that true world within the
world we see,
Whereof our world is but the bound-
ing shore—
Out of the deep, Spirit, out of the
deep,
With this ninth moon, that sends the
hidden sun
Down yon dark sea, thou comest, dar-
ling boy.

II.

For in the world, which is not ours,
They said
'Let us make man' and that which
should be man,
From that one light no man can look
upon,
Drew to this shore lit by the suns and
moons
And all the shadows. O dear Spirit
half-lost
In thine own shadow and this fleshly
sign
That thou art thou—who wailest
being born

And banish'd into mystery, and the
pain
Of this divisible-indivisible world
Among the numerable innumerable
Sun, sun, and sun, thro' finite-infinite
space
In finite-infinite Time—our mortal
veil
And shatter'd phantom of that infinite
One,
Who made thee unconceivably Thy-
self
Out of His whole World-self and all
in all—
Live thou! and of the grain and husk,
the grape
And ivyberry, choose; and still
depart
From death to death thro' life and
life, and find
Nearer and ever nearer Him, who
wrought
Not Matter, nor the finite-infinite,
But this main-miracle, that thou art
thou,
With power on thine own act and on
the world.

THE HUMAN CRY.

I.

HALLOWED be Thy name—Hallelu-
iah!—
Infinite Ideality!
Immeasurable Reality!
Infinite Personality!
Hallowed be Thy name—Halleluiah!

II.

We feel we are nothing—for all is
Thou and in Thee;
We feel we are something—that also
has come from Thee;
We know we are nothing—but Thou
wilt help us to be.
Hallowed be Thy name—Halleluiah!



"BUT KEEP THE SECRET FOR YOUR LIFE."—Page 96.



QUEEN MARY:

A DRAMA.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

QUEEN MARY.

PHILIP, *King of Naples and Sicily, afterwards King of Spain*

THE PRINCESS ELIZABETH.

REGINALD POLE, *Cardinal and Papal Legate.*

SIMON RENARD, *Spanish Ambassador.*

LE SIEUR DE NOAILLES, *French Ambassador.*

THOMAS CRANMER, *Archbishop of Canterbury.*

SIR NICHOLAS HEATH, *Archbishop of York; Lord Chancellor after Gardiner.*

EDWARD COURTENAY, *Earl of Devon.*

LORD WILLIAM HOWARD, *afterwards Lord Howard, and Lord High Admiral.*

LORD WILLIAMS OF THAME.

LORD PAGET.

LORD PETRE.

STEPHEN GAROINER, *Bishop of Winchester and Lord Chancellor.*

EDMUND BONNER, *Bishop of London.*

THOMAS THIRLBY, *Bishop of Ely.*

SIR THOMAS WYATT

SIR THOMAS STAFFORD } *Insurrectionary Leaders.*

SIR RALPH BAGENHALL.

SIR ROBERT SOUTHWELL.

SIR HENRY BEDINGFIELD.

SIR WILLIAM CECIL.

SIR THOMAS WHITE, *Lord Mayor of London.*

THE DUKE OF ALVA

THE COUNT DE FERIA } *attending on Philip.*

PETER MARTYR.

FATHER COLE.

FATHER BOURNE.

VILLA GARCIA.

SOTO.

CAPTAIN BRETT

ANTHONY KNYVETT

PETERS, *Gentleman of Lord Howard.*

ROGER, *Servant to Noailles.*

WILLIAM, *Servant to Wyatt.*

STEWARD OF HOUSEHOLD *to the Princess Elizabeth.*

OLD NOKES and NOKES.

MARCHIONESS OF EXETER, *Mother of Courtenay.*

LADY CLARENCE

LADY MAGDALEN DACRES

ALICE

MAID OF HONOR *to the Princess Elizabeth.*

JOAN } *two Country Wives.*

TIB }

Lords and other Attendants, Members of the Privy Council, Members of Parliament, Two Gentlemen, Aldermen, Citizens, Peasants, Ushers, Messengers, Guards, Pages, Gospellers, Marshalmen, etc.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—ALDGATE RICHLY DECORATED.

CROWD. MARSHALMEN.

Marshalmen. Stand back, keep a clear lane! When will her Majesty pass, sayst thou? why now, even now; wherefore draw back your heads

and your horns before I break them, and make what noise you will with your tongues, so it be not treason. Long live Queen Mary, the lawful and legitimate daughter of Harry the Eighth! Shout, knaves!

Citizens. Long live Queen Mary!

First Citizen. That's a hard word, legitimate; what does it mean?

Second Citizen. It means a bastard.

Third Citizen. Nay, it means true-born.

First Citizen. Why, didn't the Parliament make her a bastard?

Second Citizen. No; it was the Lady Elizabeth.

Third Citizen. That was after, man; that was after.

First Citizen. Then which is the bastard?

Second Citizen. Troth, they be both bastards by Act of Parliament and Council.

Third Citizen. Ay, the Parliament can make every true-born man of us a bastard. Old Nokes, can't it, make thee a bastard? thou shouldst know, for thou art as white as three Christ-masses.

Old Nokes (dreamily). Who's a-passing? King Edward or King Richard?

Third Citizen. No, old Nokes.

Old Nokes. It's Harry!

Third Citizen. It's Queen Mary.

Old Nokes. The blessed Mary's a-passing! *[Falls on his knees.]*

Nokes. Let father alone, my masters! he's past your questioning.

Third Citizen. Answer thou for him, then! thou'rt no such cockerel thyself, for thou was born i' the tail end of old Harry the Seventh.

Nokes. Eh! that was afore bastard-making began. I was born true man at five in the forenoon i' the tail of old Harry, and so they can't make me a bastard.

Third Citizen. But if Parliament can make the Queen a bastard, why, it follows all the more that they can make thee one, who art fray'd i' the knees, and out at elbow, and bald o' the back, and bursten at the toes, and down at heels.

Nokes. I was born of a true man and a ring'd wife, and I can't argue upon it; but I and my old woman 'ud burn upon it, that would we.

Marshallman. What are you cackling of bastardy under the Queen's own nose? I'll have you flogg'd and burnt too, by the Rood I will.

First Citizen. He swears by the Rood. Whew!

Second Citizen. Hark! the trum-
pets.

[The Procession passes, Mary and Elizabeth riding side by side, and disappears under the gate. [Exit.]

Citizens. Long live Queen Mary! down with all traitors! God save her Grace; and death to Northumberland!

Remain TWO GENTLEMEN.

First Gentleman. By God's light a noble creature, right royal!

Second Gentleman. She looks comelier than ordinary to-day; but to my mind the Lady Elizabeth is the more noble and royal.

First Gentleman. I mean the Lady Elizabeth. Did you hear (I have a daughter in her service who reported it) that she met the Queen at Wanstead with five hundred horse, and the Queen (tho' some say they be much divided) took her hand, call'd her sweet sister, and kiss'd not her alone, but all the ladies of her following.

Second Gentleman. Ay, that was in her hour of joy; there will be plenty to sunder and unsister them again: this Gardiner for one, who is to be made Lord Chancellor, and will pounce like a wild beast out of his cage to worry Cranmer.

First Gentleman. And furthermore, my daughter said that when there rose a talk of the late rebellion, she spoke even of Northumberland pitifully, and of the good Lady Jane as a poor innocent child who had but obeyed her father; and furthermore, she said that no one in her time should be burnt for heresy.

Second Gentleman. Well, sir, I look for happy times.

First Gentleman. There is but one thing against them. I know not if you know.

Second Gentleman. I suppose you

touch upon the rumor that Charles, the master of the world, has offer'd her his son Philip, the Pope and the Devil. I trust it is but a rumor.

First Gentleman. She is going now to the Tower to loose the prisoners there, and among them Courtenay, to be made Earl of Devon, of royal blood, of splendid feature, whom the council and all her people wish her to marry. May it be so, for we are many of us Catholics, but few Papists, and the Hot Gospellers will go mad upon it.

Second Gentleman. Was she not betroth'd in her babyhood to the Great Emperor himself?

First Gentleman. Ay, but he's too old.

Second Gentleman. And again to her cousin Reginald Pole, now Cardinal; but I hear that he too is full of aches and broken before his day.

First Gentleman. O, the Pope could dispense with his Cardinalate, and his achage, and his breakage, if that were all: will you not follow the procession?

Second Gentleman. No; I have seen enough for this day.

First Gentleman. Well, I shall follow; if I can get near enough I shall judge with my own eyes whether her Grace incline to this splendid scion of Plantagenet. [Exit.

SCENE II.

A ROOM IN LAMBETH PALACE.

Cranmer. To Strasburg, Antwerp, Frankfort, Zurich, Worms, Geneva, Basle—our Bishops from their sees
Or fled, they say, or flying—Poinet, Barlow,
Bale, Scoŕy, Coverdale; besides the Deans
Of Christchurch, Durham, Exeter, and Wells—
Ailmer and Bullingham, and hundreds more;

So they report: I shall be left alone.
No: Hooper, Ridley, Latimer will not fly.

Enter PETER MARTYR.

Peter Martyr. Fly, Cranmer! were there nothing else, your name
Stands first of those who sign'd the Letters Patent
That gave her royal crown to Lady Jane.

Cranmer. Stand first it may, but it was written last:
Those that are now her Privy Council, sign'd

Before me: nay, the Judges had pronounced

That our young Edward might bequeath the crown

Of England, putting by his father's will.

Yet I stood out, till Edward sent for me.

The wan boy-king, with his fast-fading eyes

Fixt hard on mine, his frail transparent hand,

Damp with the sweat of death, and griping mine,

Whisper'd me, if I loved him, not to yield

His Church of England to the Papal wolf

And Mary; then I could no more—I sign'd.

Nay, for bare shame of inconsistency, She cannot pass her traitor council

by,
To make me headless.

Peter Martyr. That might be forgiven.

I tell you, fly, my Lord. You do not own

The bodily presence in the Eucharist, Their wafer and perpetual sacrifice:

Your creed will be your death.

Cranmer. Step after step, Thro' many voices crying right and left,

Have I climb'd back into the primal church,

And stand within the porch, and
Christ with me :

My flight were such a scandal to the
faith,

The downfall of so many simple
souls,

I dare not leave my post.

Peter Martyr. But you divorced
Queen Catharine and her father ;
hence, her hate

Will burn till you are burn'd.

Cranmer. I cannot help it.
The Canonists and Schoolmen were
with me.

'Thou shalt not wed thy brother's
wife.'—'Tis written,

'They shall be childless.' True, Mary
was born,

But France would not accept her for a
bride

As being born from incest ; and this
wrought

Upon the king ; and child by child,
you know,

Were momentary sparkles out as
quick

Almost as kindled ; and he brought
his doubts

And fears to me. Peter, I'll swear for
him

He *did* believe the bond incestuous.

But wherefore am I trenching on the
time

That should already have seen your
steps a mile

From me and Lambeth ? God be with
you ! Go.

Peter Martyr. Ah, but how fierce a
letter you wrote against

Their superstition when they slander'd
you

For setting up a mass at Canterbury
To please the Queen.

Cranmer. It was a wheedling
monk

Set up the mass.

Peter Martyr. I know it, my good
Lord.

But you so bubbled over with hot
terms

Of Satan, liars, blasphemy, Antichrist,
She never will forgive you. Fly, my
Lord, fly !

Cranmer. I wrote it, and God grant
me power to burn !

Peter Martyr. They have given me
a safe conduct : for all that
I dare not stay. I fear, I fear, I see
you,

Dear friend, for the last time ; fare-
well, and fly.

Cranmer. Fly and farewell, and
let me die the death.

[*Exit Peter Martyr.*]

Enter OLD SERVANT.

O, kind and gentle master, the
Queen's Officers

Are here in force to take you to the
Tower.

Cranmer. Ay, gentle friend, admit
them. I will go.

I thank my God it is too late to fly.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.—ST. PAUL'S CROSS.

FATHER BOURNE *in the pulpit.* *A*
crowd. MARCHIONESS OF EXETER,
COURTENAY. *The* SIEUR DE
NOAILLES *and his man* ROGER *in*
front of the stage. *Hubbub.*

Noailles. Hast thou let fall those
papers in the palace ?

Roger. Ay, sir.

Noailles. 'There will be no peace
for Mary till Elizabeth lose her head.'

Roger. Ay, sir.

Noailles. And the other, 'Long
live Elizabeth the Queen !'

Roger. Ay, sir ; she needs must
tread upon them.

Noailles. Well.

These beastly swine make such a
grunting here,

I cannot catch what Father Bourne is
saying.

Roger. Quiet a moment, my mas-
ters ; hear what the shaveling has to
say for himself.

Crowd. Hush—hear !

Bourne. —and so this unhappy
land, long divided in itself, and sever'd
from the faith, will return into the one

true fold, seeing that our gracious Virgin Queen hath—

Crowd. No pope! no pope!

Roger (to those about him, mimicking Bourne). —hath sent for the holy legate of the holy father the Pope, Cardinal Pole, to give us all that holy absolution which—

First Citizen. Old Bourne to the life!

Second Citizen. Holy absolution! holy Inquisition!

Third Citizen. Down with the Papist! [*Hubbub.*]

Bourne. —and now that your good bishop, Bonner, who hath lain so long under bonds for the faith— [*Hubbub.*]

Noailles. Friend Roger, steal thou in among the crowd,
And get the swine to shout Elizabeth.

Yon gray old Gospeller, sour as mid-winter,
Begin with him.

Roger (goes). By the mass, old friend, we'll have no pope here while the Lady Elizabeth lives.

Gospeller. Art thou of the true faith, fellow, that swearest by the mass?

Roger. Ay, that am I, new converted, but the old heaven sticks to my tongue yet.

First Citizen. He says right; by the mass we'll have no mass here.

Voices of the crowd. Peace! hear him; let his own words damn the Papist. From thine own mouth I judge thee—tear him down!

Bourne. —and since our Gracious Queen, let me call her our second Virgin Mary, hath begun to re-edify the true temple—

First Citizen. Virgin Mary! we'll have no virgins here—we'll have the Lady Elizabeth!

[*Swords are drawn, a knife is hurled and sticks in the pulpit. The mob throng to the pulpit stairs.*]

Marchioness of Exeter. Son Courtenay, wilt thou see the holy father

Murdered before thy face? up, son, and save him!

They love thee, and thou canst not come to harm.

Courtenay (in the pulpit). Shame shame, my masters! are you English-born,
And set yourselves by hundreds against one?

Crowd. A Courtenay! a Courtenay!

[*A train of Spanish servants crosses at the back of the stage.*]

Noailles. These birds of passage come before their time:
Stave off the crowd upon the Spaniard there.

Roger. My masters, yonder's father game for you
Than this old gaping gurgyle: look you there—

The Prince of Spain coming to wed our Queen!

After him, boys! and pelt him from the city.

[*They seize stones and follow the Spaniards. Exeunt on the other side Marchioness of Exeter and Attendants.*]

Noailles (to Roger). Stand from me. If Elizabeth lose her head—

That makes for France.

And if her people, anger'd thereupon,
Arise against her and dethrone the Queen—

That makes for France.

And if I breed confusion anyway—
That makes for France.

Good-day, my Lord of Devon;
A bold heart yours to beard that raging mob!

Courtenay. My mother said, Go up; and up I went.

I knew they would not do me any wrong,

For I am mighty popular with them,
Noailles.

Noailles. You look'd a king.

Courtenay. Why not? I am king's blood.

Noailles. And in the whirl of change may come to be one.

Courtenay. Ah!

Noailles. But does your gracious Queen entreat you kinglike?

Courtenay. 'Fore God, I think she entreats me like a child.

Noailles. You've but a dull life in this maiden court,
I fear, my Lord?

Courtenay. A life of nods and yawns.

Noailles. So you would honor my poor house to-night,
We might enliven you. Divers honest fellows,
The Duke of Suffolk lately freed from prison,

Sir Peter Carew and Sir Thomas Wyatt,

Sir Thomas Stafford, and some more —we play.

Courtenay. At what?

Noailles. The Game of Chess.

Courtenay. The Game of Chess!

I can play well, and I shall beat you there.

Noailles. Ay, but we play with Henry, King of France,
And certain of his court.

His Highness makes his moves across the Channel,

We answer him with ours, and there are messengers

That go between us.

Courtenay. Why, such a game, sir, were whole years a playing.

Noailles. Nay; not so long I trust.
That all depends

Upon the skill and swiftness of the players.

Courtenay. The King is skilful at it?

Noailles. Very, my Lord.

Courtenay. And the stakes high?

Noailles. But not beyond your means.

Courtenay. Well, I'm the first of players. I shall win.

Noailles. With our advice and in our company,

And so you well attend to the king's moves,

I think you may.

Courtenay. When do you meet?

Noailles.

To-night.

Courtenay (aside). I will be there; the fellow's at his tricks—

Deep—I shall fathom him. (*Aloud.*) Good morning, *Noailles.*

[*Exit Courtenay.*]

Noailles. Good-day, my Lord. strange game of chess! a King

That with her own pawns plays against a Queen,

Whose play is all to find herself a King.

Ay; but this fine blue-blooded *Courtenay* seems

Too princely for a pawn. Call him a Knight,

That, with an ass's, not a horse's head,

Skips every way, from levity or from fear.

Well, we shall use him somehow, so that *Gardiner*

And *Simon Renard* spy not out our game

Too early. Roger, thinkest thou that anyone

Suspected thee to be my man?

Roger. Not one, sir.

Noailles. No! the disguise was perfect. Let's away. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.

LONDON. A ROOM IN THE PALACE.

ELIZABETH. *Enter COURTENAY.*

Courtenay. So yet am I,
Unless my friends and mirrors lie to me,

A goodlier-looking fellow than this Philip.

Pah!

The Queen is ill advised: shall I turn traitor?

They've almost talked me into it: yet the word

Affrights me somewhat: to be such a one

As *Harry Bolingbroke* hath a lure in it.

Good now, my Lady Queen, tho' by your age,

And by your looks you are not worth
the having,
Yet by your crown you are.

Seeing Elizabeth.
The Princess there?
If I tried her and la—she's amorous.
Have we not heard of her in Edward's
time,

Her freaks and frolics with the late
Lord Admiral?
I do believe she'd yield. I should be
still

A party in the state; and then, who
knows—

Elizabeth. What are you musing
on, my Lord of Devon?

Courtenay. Has not the Queen—

Elizabeth. Done what, Sir?

Courtenay. —made you follow
The Lady Suffolk and the Lady Len-
nox?—

You,
The heir presumptive.

Elizabeth. Why do you ask? you
know it.

Courtenay. You needs must bear
it hardly.

Elizabeth. No, indeed!

I am utterly submissive to the Queen.

Courtenay. Well, I was musing
upon that; the Queen

Is both my foe and yours: we should
be friends.

Elizabeth. My Lord, the hatred of
another to us

Is no true bond of friendship.

Courtenay. Might it not
Be the rough preface of some closer
bond?

Elizabeth. My Lord, you late were
loosed from out the Tower,

Where, like a butterfly in a chrysalis,
You spent your life; that broken, out
you flutter

Thro' the new world, go zigzag, now
would settle

Upon this flower, now that; but all
things here

At court are known; you have solicited
The Queen, and been rejected.

Courtenay. Flower, she!
Half faded! but you, cousin, are fresh
and sweet

As the first flower no bee has ever
tried.

Elizabeth. Are you the bee to try
me? why, but now
I called you butterfly.

Courtenay. You did me wrong,
I love not to be called a butterfly:
Why do you call me butterfly?

Elizabeth. Why do you go so gay
then?

Courtenay. Velvet and gold.
This dress was made me as the Earl
of Devon
To take my seat in; looks it not right
royal?

Elizabeth. So royal that the Queen
forbad you wearing it.

Courtenay. I wear it then to spite
her.

Elizabeth. My Lord, my Lord;
I see you in the Tower again. Her
Majesty

Hears you affect the Prince—prelates
kneel to you.—

Courtenay. I am the noblest blood
in Europe, Madam,

A Courtenay of Devon, and her
cousin.

Elizabeth. She hears you make
your boast that after all

She means to wed you. Folly, my
good Lord.

Courtenay. How folly? a great
party in the state

Wills me to wed her.

Elizabeth. Failing her, my Lord,
Doth not as great a party in the state
Will you to wed me?

Courtenay. Even so, fair lady.

Elizabeth. You know to flatter
ladies.

Courtenay. Nay, I meant
True matters of the heart.

Elizabeth. My heart, my Lord,
Is no great party in the state as yet.

Courtenay. Great, said you? nay,
you shall be great. I love you,
Lay my life in your hands. Can you
be close?

Elizabeth. Can you, my Lord?

Courtenay. Close as a miser's
casket.

Listen:

The King of France, Noailles the Ambassador,
The Duke of Suffolk and Sir Peter Carew,
Sir Thomas Wyatt, I myself, some others,
Have sworn this Spanish marriage shall not be.
If Mary will not hear us—well—conjecture—
Were I in Devon with my wedded bride,
The people there so worship me—
Your ear;
You shall be Queen.

Elizabeth. You speak too low,
my Lord;
I cannot hear you.

Courtenay. I'll repeat it.
Elizabeth. No! Stand further off, or you may lose your head.

Courtenay. I have a head to lose for your sweet sake.

Elizabeth. Have you, my Lord? Best keep it for your own.

Nay, pout not, cousin.
Not many friends are mine, except indeed

Among the many. I believe you mine;
And so you may continue mine, farewell,

And that at once.

Enter MARY, behind.

Mary. Whispering—leagued together
To bar me from my Philip.

Courtenay. Pray—consider—
Elizabeth (seeing the Queen).

Well, that's a noble horse of yours, my Lord.

I trust that he will carry you well today,

And heal your headache.

Courtenay. You are wild; what headache?

Heartache, perchance; not headache.

Elizabeth (aside to Courtenay).
Are you blind?

[*Courtenay sees the Queen and exit. Exit Mary.*]

Enter LORD WILLIAM HOWARD.

Howard. Was that my Lord of Devon? do not you
Be seen in corners with my Lord of Devon.

He hath fallen out of favor with the Queen.

She fears the Lords may side with you and him

Against her marriage; therefore is he dangerous.

And if this Prince of fluff and feather come

To woo you, niece, he is dangerous everyway.

Elizabeth. Not very dangerous that way, my good uncle.

Howard. But your own state is full of danger here.

The disaffected, heretics, reformers,
Look to you as the one to crown their ends.

Mix not yourself with any plot I pray you;

Nay, if by chance you hear of any such,

Speak not thereof—no, not to your best friend,

Lest you should be confounded with it. Still—

Perinde ac cadaver—as the priest says,

You know your Latin—quiet as a dead body.

What was my Lord of Devon telling you?

Elizabeth. Whether he told me anything or not,

I follow your good counsel, gracious uncle.

Quiet as a dead body.

Howard. You do right well. I do not care to know; but this I charge you,

Tell Courtenay nothing. The Lord Chancellor

(I count it as a kind of virtue in him,

He hath not many), as a mastiff dog

May love a puppy cur for no more
reason
Than that the twain have been tied
up together,
Thus Gardiner—for the two were fel-
low-prisoners
So many years in yon accursed
Tower—
Hath taken to this Courtenay. Look
to it, niece,
He hath no fence when Gardiner
questions him;
All oozes out; yet him—because they
know him
The last White Rose, the last Plan-
tagenet
(Nay, there is Cardinal Pole, too), the
people
Claim as their natural leader—ay,
some say,
That you shall marry him, make him
King belike.

Elizabeth. Do they say so, good
uncle?

Howard. Ay, good niece!
You should be plain and open with
me, niece.

You should not play upon me.

Elizabeth. No, good uncle.

Enter GARDINER.

Gardiner. The Queen would see
your Grace upon the moment.

Elizabeth. Why, my lord Bishop?

Gardiner. I think she means to
counsel your withdrawing
To Ashridge, or some other country
house.

Elizabeth. Why, my lord Bishop?

Gardiner. I do but bring the mes-
sage, know no more.

Your Grace will hear her reasons
from herself.

Elizabeth. 'Tis mine own wish ful-
fill'd before the word

Was spoken, for in truth I had meant
to crave

Permission of her Highness to retire
To Ashridge, and pursue my studies
there.

Gardiner. Madam, to have the
wish before the word

Is man's good Fairy—and the Queen
is yours.

I left her with rich jewels in her
hand,

Whereof 'tis like enough she means
to make

A farewell present to your Grace.

Elizabeth. My Lord,
I have the jewel of a loyal heart.

Gardiner. I doubt it not, Madam,
most loyal. [*Bows low and exit.*]

Howard. See,

This comes of parleying with my Lord
of Devon.

Well, well, you must obey; and I my-
self

Believe it will be better for your wel-
fare.

Your time will come.

Elizabeth. I think my time will
come.

Uncle,

I am of sovereign nature, that I know,
Not to be quell'd; and I have felt
within me

Stirrings of some great doom when
God's just hour

Peals—but this fierce old Gardiner—
his big baldness,

That irritable forelock which he
rubs,

His buzzard beak and deep-incavern'd
eyes

Half fright me.

Howard. You've a bold heart;
keep it so.

He cannot touch you save that you
turn traitor;

And so take heed I pray you—you are
one

Who love that men should smile upon
you, niece.

They'd smile you into treason—some
of them.

Elizabeth. I spy the rock beneath
the smiling sea.

But if this Philip, the proud Catholic
prince,

And this bald priest, and she that
hates me, seek

In that lone house, to practise on my
life,

By poison, fire, shot, stab—

Howard. They will not, niece.
Mine is the fleet and all the power at
sea—

Or will be in a moment. If they
dared

To harm you, I would blow this
Philip and all
Your trouble to the dogstar and the
devil.

Elizabeth. To the Pleiads, uncle;
they have lost a sister.

Howard. But why say that? what
have you done to lose her?

Come, come, I will go with you to the
Queen. *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE V.

A ROOM IN THE PALACE.

MARY *with* PHILIP'S *miniature.*
ALICE.

Mary (kissing the miniature). Most
goodly, Kinglike and an Em-
peror's son,—

A king to be,—is he not noble, girl?

Alice. Goodly enough, your Grace,
and yet, methinks,
I have seen goodlier.

Mary. Ay; some waxen doll
Thy baby eyes have rested on, belike;
All red and white, the fashion of our
land.

But my good mother came (God rest
her soul)

Of Spain, and I am Spanish in my-
self,

And in my likings.

Alice. By your Grace's leave
Your royal mother came of Spain, but
took

To the English red and white. Your
royal father

(For so they say) was all pure lily and
rose

In his youth, and like a lady.

Mary. O, just God!
Sweet mother, you had time and cause
enough

To sicken of his lilies and his roses.
Cast off, betray'd, defamed, divorced,
forlorn!

And then the King—that traitor past
forgiveness,

The false archbishop fawning on him,
married

The mother of Elizabeth—a heretic
Ev'n as *she* is; but God hath sent me
here

To take such order with all heretics
That it shall be, before I die, as tho'
My father and my brother had not
lived.

What wast thou saying of this Lady
Jane,

Now in the Tower?

Alice. Why, Madam, she was
passing
Some chapel down in Essex, and with
her

Lady Anne Wharton, and the Lady
Anne

Bow'd to the Pyx; but Lady Jane
stood up

Stiff as the very backbone of heresy.

And wherefore bow ye not, says Lady
Anne,

To him within there who made
Heaven and Earth?

I cannot, and I dare not, tell your
Grace

What Lady Jane replied.

Mary. But I will have it.

Alice. She said—pray pardon me,
and pity her—

She hath harken'd evil counsel—ah!
she said,

The baker made him.

Mary. Monstrous! blasphemous!
She ought to burn. Hence, thou

(*Exit Alice.*) No—being trai-
tor

Her head will fall: shall it? she is
but a child.

We do not kill the child for doing
that

His father whipt him into doing—a
head

So full of grace and beauty! would
that mine

Were half as gracious! O, my lord
to be,

My love, for thy sake only.

I am eleven years older than he is.

But will he care for that?

No, by the holy Virgin, being noble,
But love me only: then the bastard
sprout,

My sister, is far fairer than myself.
Will he be drawn to her?

No, being of the true faith with my-
self.

Paget is for him—for to wed with
Spain

Would treble England—Gardiner is
against him;

The Council, people, Parliament
against him;

But I will have him! My hard father
hated me;

My brother rather hated me than
loved;

My sister cowers and hates me. Holy
Virgin,

Plead with thy blessed Son; grant me
my prayer:

Give me my Philip; and we two will
lead

The living waters of the Faith
again

Back thro' their widow'd channel
here, and watch

The parch'd banks rolling incense, as
of old,

To heaven, and kindled with the
palms of Christ!

Enter USHER.

Who waits, sir?

Usher. Madam, the Lord Chan-
cellor.

Mary. Bid him come in. (*Enter*
GARDINER.) Good morning,
my good Lord. [*Exit Usher.*

Gardiner. That every morning of
your Majesty

May be most good, is every morning's
prayer

Of your most loyal subject, Stephen
Gardiner.

Mary. Come you to tell me this,
my Lord?

Gardiner. And more.

Your people have begun to learn your
worth.

Your pious wish to pay King Ed-
ward's debts,

Your lavish household curb'd, and
the remission

Of half that subsidy levied on the
people,

Make all tongues praise and all hearts
beat for you.

I'd have you yet more loved: the
realm is poor,

The exchequer at neap-tide: we
might withdraw

Part of our garrison at Calais.

Mary. Calais!

Our one point on the main, the gate
of France!

I am Queen of England; take mine
eyes, mine heart,

But do not lose me Calais.

Gardiner. Do not fear it.

Of that hereafter. I say your Grace
is loved.

That I may keep you thus, who am
your friend

And ever faithful counsellor, might I
speak?

Mary. I can forespeak your speak-
ing. Would I marry

Prince Philip, if all England hate
him? That is

Your question, and I front it with
another:

Is it England, or a party? Now, your
answer.

Gardiner. My answer is, I wear
beneath my dress

A shirt of mail: my house hath been
assaulted,

And when I walk abroad, the popu-
lace,

With fingers pointed like so many
daggers,

Stab me in fancy, hissing Spain and
Philip;

And when I sleep, a hundred men-at-
arms

Guard my poor dreams for England.

Men would murder me,

Because they think me favorer of this
marriage.

Mary. And that were hard upon
you, my Lord Chancellor.

Gardiner. But our young Earl of
Devon—

Mary. Earl of Devon?

I freed him from the Tower, placed
him at Court;
I made him Earl of Devon, and—the
fool—

He wrecks his health and wealth on
courtesans,
And rolls himself in carrion like a
dog.

Gardiner. More like a school-boy
that hath broken bounds,
Sickening himself with sweets.

Mary. I will not hear of him.
Good, then, they will revolt: but I
am Tudor,
And shall control them.

Gardiner. I will help you, Madam,
Even to the utmost. All the church
is grateful.

You have ousted the mock priest, re-
pulpited

The shepherd of St. Peter, raised the
rood again,

And brought us back the mass. I am
all thanks

To God and to your Grace: yet I
know well,

Your people, and I go with them so
far,

Will brook nor Pope nor Spaniard
here to play

The tyrant, or in commonwealth or
church.

Mary (showing the picture). Is this
the face of one who plays the
tyrant?

Peruse it; is it not goodly, ay, and
gentle?

Gardiner. Madam, methinks a
cold face and a haughty.

And when your Highness talks of
Courtenay—

Ay, true—a goodly one. I would his
life

Were half as goodly (*aside*).

Mary. What is that you mutter?

Gardiner. Oh, Madam, take it
bluntly; marry Philip,

And be stepmother of a score of sons!
The Prince is known in Spain, in

Flanders, ha!

For Philip—

Mary. You offend us; you may
leave us.

You see thro' warping glasses.

Gardiner. If your Majesty—

Mary. I have sworn upon the
body and blood of Christ

I'll none but Philip.

Gardiner. Hath your Grace so
sworn?

Mary. Ay, Simon Renard knows
it.

Gardiner. News to me!
It then remains for your poor Gardi-

ner,
So you still care to trust him some-
what less

Than Simon Renard, to compose the
event

In some such form as least may harm
your Grace.

Mary. I'll have the scandal
sounded to the mud.

I know it a scandal.

Gardiner. All my hope is now
It may be found a scandal.

Mary. You offend us.

Gardiner (aside). These princes
are like children, must be

physick'd,
The bitter in the sweet. I have lost

mine office,
It may be, thro' mine honesty, like a

fool. [*Exit.*]

Enter USHER.

Mary. Who waits?

Usher. The Ambassador from
France, your Grace.

Mary (sits down). Bid him come
in. Good morning, Sir de

Noailles. [*Exit Usher.*]

Noailles (entering). A happy morn-

ing to your Majesty.

Mary. And I should some time
have a happy morning;

I have had none yet. What says the
King your master?

Noailles. Madam, my master hears
with much alarm,

That you may marry Philip, Prince of
Spain—

Foreseeing, with whate'er unwilling-
ness,

That if this Philip be the titular king
Of England, and at war with him,
your Grace
And kingdom will be suck'd into the war,
Ay, tho' you long for peace; wherefore, my master,
If but to prove your Majesty's goodwill,
Would fain have some fresh treaty drawn between you.

Mary. Why some fresh treaty? wherefore should I do it?
Sir, if we marry, we shall still maintain
All former treaties with his Majesty.
Our royal word for that! and your good master,
Pray God he do not be the first to break them,
Must be content with that; and so, farewell.

Noailles (going, returns). I would your answer had been other, Madam,
For I foresee dark days.

Mary. And so do I, sir;
Your master works against me in the dark.
I do believe he help Northumberland Against me.

Noailles. Nay, pure phantasy, your Grace.

Why should he move against you?

Mary. Will you hear why?
Mary of Scotland,—for I have not own'd

My sister, and I will not,—after me

Is heir of England; and my royal father,

To make the crown of Scotland one with ours,

Had mark'd her for my brother Edward's bride;

Ay, but your king stole her a babe from Scotland

In order to betroth her to your Dauphin.

See then:

Mary of Scotland, married to your Dauphin,

Would make our England, France;
Mary of England, joining hands with Spain,
Would be too strong for France.

Yea, were there issue born to her,
Spain and we,

One crown, might rule the world.
There lies your fear.

That is your drift. You play at hide and seek.

Show me your faces!

Noailles. Madam, I am amazed:
French, I must needs wish all good things for France.

That must be pardon'd me; but I protest

Your Grace's policy hath a farther flight

Than mine into the future. We but seek

Some settled ground for peace to stand upon.

Mary. Well, we will leave all this, sir, to our council.

Have you seen Philip ever?

Noailles. Only once.

Mary. Is this like Philip?

Noailles. Ay, but nobler-looking.

Mary. Hath he the large ability of the Emperor?

Noailles. No, surely.

Mary. I can make allowance for thee,

Thou speakest of the enemy of thy king.

Noailles. Make no allowance for the naked truth.

He is every way a lesser man than Charles;

Stone-hard, ice-cold—no dash of daring in him.

Mary. If cold, his life is pure.

Noailles. Why (*smiling*), no, indeed.

Mary. Sayst thou?

Noailles. A very wanton life indeed (*smiling*)

Mary. Your audience is concluded, sir. [*Exit Noailles.*]

You cannot

Learn a man's nature from his natural foe.

Enter USHER.

Who waits?

Usher. The Ambassador of Spain,
your Grace. [*Exit.*]

Enter SIMON RENARD.

Mary (rising to meet him). Thou
art ever welcome, Simon Ren-
nard. Hast thou
Brought me the letter which thine
Emperor promised
Long since, a formal offer of the hand
Of Philip?

Renard. Nay, your Grace, it hath
not reach'd me.
I know not wherefore—some mis-
chance of flood,
And broken bridge, or spavin'd horse,
or wave
And wind at their old battle: he
must have written.

Mary. But Philip never writes me
one poor word,
Which in his absence had been all
my wealth.
Strange in a wooer!

Renard. Yet I know the
Prince,
So your king-parliament suffer him to
land,
Years to set foot upon your island
shore.

Mary. God change the pebble
which his kingly foot
First presses into some more costly
stone
Than ever blinded eye. I'll have one
mark it
And bring it me. I'll have it bur-
nish'd firelike;
I'll set it round with gold, with pearl,
with diamond.
Let the great angel of the church
come with him;
Stand on the deck and spread his
wings for sail!
God lay the waves and strow the
storms at sea,
And here at land among the people!
O Renard,
I am much beset, I am almost in de-
spair.

Paget is ours. Gardiner perchance is
ours;

But for our heretic Parliament—

Renard. O Madam,
You fly your thoughts like kites. My
master, Charles,
Bad you go softly with your heretics
here,
Until your throne had ceased to
tremble. Then
Spit them like larks for aught I care.

Besides,
When Henry broke the carcase of
your church

To pieces, there were many wolves
among you
Who dragg'd the scatter'd limbs into
their den.

The Pope would have you make them
render these;
So would your cousin, Cardinal Pole;
ill counsel!

These let them keep at present; stir
not yet

This matter of the Church lands. At
his coming
Your star will rise.

Mary. My star! a baleful one.
I see but the black night, and hear the
wolf.

What star?

Renard. Your star will be your
princely son,
Heir of this England and the Nether-
lands!

And if your wolf the while should
howl for more,
We'll dust him from a bag of Spanish
gold.

I do believe, I have dusted some al-
ready,
That, soon or late, your Parliament is
ours.

Mary. Why do they talk so foully
of your Prince,

Renard?

Renard. The lot of Princes. To
sit high
Is to be lied about.

Mary. They call him cold,
Haughty, ay, worse.

Renard. Why, doubtless, Philip
shows

Some of the bearing of your blue blood—still
All within measure—nay, it well becomes him.

Mary. Hath he the large ability of his father?

Renard. Nay, some believe that he will go beyond him.

Mary. Is this like him?

Renard. Ay, somewhat; but your Philip—

Is the most princelike Prince beneath the sun.

This is a daub to Philip.

Mary. Of a pure life?

Renard. As an angel among angels. Yea, by Heaven,

The text—Your Highness knows it, 'Whosoever

Looketh after a woman,' would not graze

The Prince of Spain. You are happy in him there,

Chaste as your Grace!

Mary. I am happy in him there.

Renard. And would be altogether happy, Madam,

So that your sister were but look'd to closer.

You have sent her from the court, but then she goes,

I warrant, not to hear the nightingales,

But hatch you some new treason in the woods.

Mary. We have our spies abroad to catch her tripping,

And then if caught, to the tower.

Renard. The Tower! the block!

The word has turn'd your Highness pale; the thing

Was no such scarecrow in your father's time.

I have heard, the tongue yet quiver'd with the jest

When the head leapt—so common! I do think

To save your crown that it must come to this.

Mary. No, Renard; it must never come to this.

Renard. Not yet; but your old Traitors of the Tower—

Why, when you put Northumberland to death,

The sentence having past upon them all,

Spared you the Duke of Suffolk, Guildford Dudley,

Ev'n that young girl who dared to wear your crown?

Mary. Dared? nay, not so; the child obey'd her father.

Spite of her tears her father forced it on her.

Renard. Good Madam, when the Roman wish'd to reign,

He slew not him alone who wore the purple,

But his assessor in the throne, perchance

A child more innocent than Lady Jane.

Mary. I am English Queen, not Roman Emperor.

Renard. Yet too much mercy is a want of mercy,

And wastes more life. Stamp out the fire, or this

Will smoulder and re-flame, and burn the throne

Where you should sit with Philip: he will not come

Till she be gone.

Mary. Indeed, if that were true—For Philip comes, one hand in mine, and one

Steadying the tremulous pillars of the Church—

But no, no, no. Farewell. I am somewhat faint

With our long talk. Tho' Queen, I am not Queen

Of mine own heart, which every now and then

Beats me half dead: yet stay, this golden chain—

My father on a birthday gave it me,

And I have broken with my father—take

And wear it as memorial of a morning

Which found me full of foolish doubts, and leaves me

As hopeful.

Renard (aside). Whew—the folly
of all follies
Is to be love-sick for a shadow.
(*Aloud*) Madam,
This chains me to your service, not
with gold,
But dearest links of love. Farewell,
and trust me,

Philip is yours. [*Exit.*]
Mary. Mine—but not yet all
mine.

Enter USHER.

Usher. Your Council is in Session,
please your Majesty.

Mary. Sir, let them sit. I must
have time to breathe.
No, say I come. (*Exit Usher.*) I
won by boldness once.
The Emperor counsell'd me to fly to
Flanders.
I would not; but a hundred miles I
rode,
Sent out my letters, call'd my friends
together,
Struck home and won.
And when the Council would not
crown me—thought
To bind me first by oaths I could not
keep,
And keep with Christ and conscience
—was it boldness
Or weakness that won there? when I,
their Queen,
Cast myself down upon my knees
before them,
And those hard men brake into
woman-tears,
Ev'n Gardiner, all amazed, and in that
passion
Gave me my Crown.

Enter ALICE.

Girl; hast thou ever heard
Slanders against Prince Philip in our
Court?

Alice. What slanders? I, your
Grace; no, never.

Mary. Nothing?

Alice. Never, your Grace.

Mary. See that you neither hear
them nor repeat!

Alice (aside). Good Lord! but I
have heard a thousand such.
Ay, and repeated them as often—
mum!
Why comes that old fox-Fleming back
again?

Enter RENARD.

Renard. Madam, I scarce had left
your Grace's presence
Before I chanced upon the messenger
Who brings that letter which we
waited for—

The formal offer of Prince Philip's
hand.

It craves an instant answer, Ay or
No.

Mary. An instant Ay or No! the
Council sits.
Give it me quick.

Alice (stepping before her). Your
Highness is all trembling.

Mary. Make way.

[*Exit into the Council Chamber.*]

Alice. O, Master Renard, Master
Renard,
If you have falsely painted your fine
Prince;

Praised, where you should have
blamed him, I pray God

No woman ever love you, Master
Renard.

It breaks my heart to hear her moan
at night

As tho' the nightmare never left her
bed.

Renard. My pretty maiden, tell
me, did you ever
Sigh for a beard?

Alice. That's not a pretty question.

Renard. Not prettily put? I
mean, my pretty maiden,
A pretty man for such a pretty
maiden.

Alice. My Lord of Devon is a
pretty man.

I hate him. Well, but if I have, what
then?

Renard. Then, pretty maiden, you
should know that whether

A wind be warm or cold, it serves to
fan

A kindled fire.

Alice. According to the song.

His friends would praise him, I believed
'em,

His foes would blame him, and I scorn'd
'em,

His friends—as Angels I received 'em,
His foes—the Devil had suborn'd 'em.

Renard. Peace, pretty maiden.
I hear them stirring in the Council
Chamber.

Lord Paget's 'Ay' is sure—who else?
and yet,

They are all too much at odds to close
at once

In one full-throated No! Her High-
ness comes.

Enter MARY.

Alice. How deathly pale!—a chair,
your Highness.

[*Bringing one to the Queen.*

Renard. Madam,
The Council?

Mary. Ay! My Philip is all
mine.

[*Sinks into chair, half fainting.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—ALINGTON CASTLE.

Sir Thomas Wyatt. I do not hear
from Carew or the Duke
Of Suffolk, and till then I should not
move.

The Duke hath gone to Leicester;
Carew stirs

In Devon: that fine porcelain Courte-
nay,

Save that he fears he might be crack'd
in using,

(I have known a semi-madman in my
time

So fancy-ridd'n) should be in Devon
too.

Enter WILLIAM.

News abroad, William?

William. None so new, Sir
Thomas, and none so old, Sir Thomas.
No new news that Philip comes to
wed Mary, no old news that all men
hate it. Old Sir Thomas would have
hated it. The bells are ringing at
Maidstone. Doesn't your worship
hear?

Wyatt. Ay, for the Saints are
come to reign again,
Most like it is a Saint's-day. There's
no call

As yet for me; so in this pause,
before

The mine be fired, it were a pious
work

To string my father's sonnets, left
about

Like loosely-scatter'd jewels, in fair
order,

And head them with a lamer rhyme of
mine,

To grace his memory.

William. Ay, why not, Sir Thomas?
He was a fine courtier, he; Queen
Anne loved him. All the women
loved him. I loved him; I was in
Spain with him. I couldn't eat in
Spain, I couldn't sleep in Spain. I
hate Spain, Sir Thomas.

Wyatt. But thou could'st drink in
Spain if I remember.

William. Sir Thomas, we may
grant the wine. Old Sir Thomas
always granted the wine.

Wyatt. Hand me the casket with
my father's sonnets.

William. Ay—sonnets—a fine
courtier of the old Court, old Sir
Thomas. [*Exit.*

Wyatt. Courtier of many courts, he
loved the more

His own gray towers, plain life and
letter'd peace,

To read and rhyme in solitary fields,
The lark above, the nightingale be-
low,

And answer them in song. The sire
begets

Not half his likeness in the son. I
fail

Where he was fullest: yet—to write
it down. [*He writes.*

Re-enter WILLIAM.

William. There is news, there is news, and no call for sonnet-sorting now, nor for sonnet-making either, but ten thousand men on Penenden Heath all calling after your worship, and your worship's name heard into Maidstone Market, and your worship the first man in Kent and Christendom, for the Queen's down, and the world's up, and your worship a-top of it.

Wyatt. Inverted Æsop—mountain out of mouse.
Say for ten thousand ten—and pot-house knaves,
Brain-dizzied with a draught of morning ale.

Enter ANTONY KNYVETT.

William. Here's Antony Knyvett.

Knyvett. Look you, Master Wyatt, Tear up that woman's work there.

Wyatt. No; not these,
Dumb children of my father, that will speak

When I and thou and all rebellions lie

Dead bodies without voice. Song flies you know

For ages.

Knyvett. Tut, your sonnet's a flying ant,
Wing'd for a moment.

Wyatt. Well, for mine own work,
[*Tearing the paper.*]

It lies there in six pieces at your feet;
For all that I can carry it in my head.

Knyvett. If you can carry your head upon your shoulders.

Wyatt. I fear you come to carry it off my shoulders,

And sonnet-making's safer.

Knyvett. Why, good Lord,
Write you as many sonnets as you will.

Ay, but not now; what, have you eyes, ears, brains?

This Philip and the black-faced swarms of Spain,

The hardest, cruellest people in the world,

Come locusting upon us, eat us up,

Confiscate lands, goods, money—

Wyatt, Wyatt,
Wake, or the stout old island will become

A rotten limb of Spain. They roar for you

On Penenden Heath, a thousand of them—more—

All arm'd, waiting a leader; there's no glory

Like his who saves his country; and you sit

Sing-singing here; but, if I'm any judge,

By God, you are as poor a poet, Wyatt,

As a good soldier.

Wyatt. You as poor a critic
As an honest friend: you stroke me on one cheek,

Buffet the other: Come, you bluster, Antony!

You know I know all this. I must not move

Until I hear from Carew and the Duke.

I fear the mine is fired before the time.

Knyvett (showing a paper). But here's some Hebrew. Faith,

I half forgot it.

Look; can you make it English? A strange youth

Suddenly thrust it on me, whisper'd, 'Wyatt,'

And whisking round a corner, show'd his back

Before I read his face.

Wyatt. Ha! Courtenay's cipher.
[*Reads.*]

'Sir Peter Carew fled to France: it is thought the Duke will be taken. I

am with you still; but, for appearance sake, stay with the Queen. Gardiner

knows, but the Council are all at odds, and the Queen hath no force for resistance. Move, if you move, at once.'

Is Peter Carew fled? Is the Duke taken?

Down scabbard, and out sword! and let Rebellion

Roar till throne rock, and crown fall.

No; not that;

But we will teach Queen Mary how to reign.

Who are those that shout below there?

Knyvett. Why, some fifty
That follow'd me from Penenden
Heath in hope
To hear you speak.

Wyatt. Open the window, Knyvett;
The mine is fired, and I will speak to them.

Men of Kent; England of England; you that have kept your old customs upright, while all the rest of England bow'd theirs to the Norman, the cause that hath brought us together is not the cause of a county or a shire, but of this England, in whose crown our Kent is the fairest jewel. Philip shall not wed Mary; and ye have called me to be your leader. I know Spain. I have been there with my father; I have seen them in their own land; have marked the haughtiness of their nobles; the cruelty of their priests. If this man marry our Queen, however the Council and the Commons may fence round his power with restriction, he will be King, King of England, my masters; and the Queen, and the laws, and the people, his slaves. What? shall we have Spain on the throne and in the parliament; Spain in the pulpit and on the law-bench; Spain in all the great offices of state; Spain in our ships, in our forts, in our houses, in our beds?

Crowd. No! no! no Spain!

William. No Spain in our beds—that were worse than all. I have been there with old Sir Thomas, and the beds I know. I hate Spain.

A Peasant. But, Sir Thomas, must we levy war against the Queen's Grace?

Wyatt. No, my friend; war for the Queen's Grace—to save her from herself and Philip—war against Spain. And think not we shall be alone—thousands will flock to us. The Coun-

cil, the Court itself, is on our side. The Lord Chancellor himself is on our side. The King of France is with us; the King of Denmark is with us; the world is with us—war against Spain! And if we move not now, yet it will be known that we have moved; and if Philip come to be King, O, my God! the rope, the rack, the thumbscrew, the stake, the fire. If we move not now, Spain moves, bribes our nobles with her gold, and creeps, creeps snake-like about our legs till we cannot move at all; and ye know, my masters, that wherever Spain hath ruled she hath wither'd all beneath her. Look at the New World—a paradise made hell; the red man, that good helpless creature, starved, maim'd, flogg'd, flay'd, burn'd, boil'd, buried alive, worried by dogs; and here, nearer home, the Netherlands, Sicily, Naples, Lombardy. I say no more—only this, their lot is yours. Forward to London with me! forward to London! If ye love your liberties or your skins, forward to London!

Crowd. Forward to London! A

Wyatt! a Wyatt!

Wyatt. But first to Rochester, to take the guns

From out the vessels lying in the river.

Then on.

A Peasant. Ay, but I fear we be too few, Sir Thomas.

Wyatt. Not many yet. The world as yet, my friend,

Is not half-waked; but every parish tower

Shall clang and clash alarum as we pass,

And pour along the land, and swell'n and fed

With indraughts and side-currents, in full force

Roll upon London.

Crowd. A Wyatt! a Wyatt! Forward!

Knyvett. Wyatt, shall we proclaim Elizabeth?

Wyatt. I'll think upon it, Knyvett.

Knyvett. Or Lady Jane?

Wyatt. No, poor soul; no.

Ah, gray old castle of Alington,
green field

Beside the brimming Medway, it may
chance

That I shall never look upon you
more.

Knyvett. Come, now, you're sonnet-
ting again.

Wyatt.

Not I.

I'll have my head set higher in the
state;

Or—if the Lord God will it—on the
stake. *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE II.—GUILDHALL.

SIR THOMAS WHITE (The Lord
Mayor), LORD WILLIAM HOWARD,
SIR RALPH BAGENHALL, ALDER-
MEN and CITIZENS.

White. I trust the Queen comes
hither with her guards.

Howard. Ay, all in arms.

[Several of the citizens move hastily out of the hall.]

Why do they hurry out there?

White. My Lord, cut out the rotten
from your apple,

Your apple eats the better. Let
them go.

They go like those old Pharisees in
John

Convicted by their conscience, arrant
cowards,

Or tamperers with that treason out of
Kent.

When will her Grace be here?

Howard. In some few minutes.
She will address your guilds and com-
panies.

I have striven in vain to raise a man
for her,

But help her in this exigency, make
Your city loyal, and be the mightiest
man

This day in England.

White. I am Thomas White.
Few things have fail'd to which I set
my will.

I do my most and best.

Howard. You know that after
The Captain Brett, who went with
your train bands

To fight with Wyatt, had gone over
to him

With all his men, the Queen in that
distress

Sent Cornwallis and Hastings to the
traitor,

Feigning to treat with him about her
marriage—

Know too what Wyatt said.

White. He'd sooner be,
While this same marriage question
was being argued,

Trusted than trust—the scoundrel—
and demanded

Possession of her person and the
Tower.

Howard. And four of her poor
Council too, my Lord,

As hostages.

White. I know it. What do and
Say your Council at this hour?

Howard. I will trust you.

We fling ourselves on you, my Lord.

The Council,
The Parliament as well, are troubled
waters;

And yet like waters of the fen they
know not

Which way to flow. All hangs on
her address,

And upon you, Lord Mayor.

White. How look'd the city
When now you past it? Quiet?

Howard. Like our Council,
Your city is divided. As we past,
Some hail'd, some hiss'd us. There
were citizens

Stood each before his shut-up booth,
and look'd

As grim and grave as from a funeral.
And here a knot of ruffians all in
rags,

With execrating execrable eyes,
Glared at the citizen. Here was a
young mother,

Her face on flame, her red hair all
blown back,

She shrilling 'Wyatt,' while the boy
she held

Mimick'd and piped her 'Wyatt,' as
red as she

In hair and cheek; and almost elbow-
ing her,

So close they stood, another, mute as
death,

And white as her own milk; her babe
in arms

Had felt the faltering of his mother's
heart,

And look'd as bloodless. Here a
pious Catholic,

Mumbling and mixing up in his
scared prayers

Heaven and earth's Maries; over his
bow'd shoulder

Scowl'd that world-hated and world-
hating beast,

A haggard Anabaptist. Many such
groups.

The names of Wyatt, Elizabeth, Cour-
tenay,

Nay the Queen's right to reign—'fore
God, the rogues—

Were freely buzzed among them. So
I say

Your city is divided, and I fear
One scruple, this or that way, of suc-
cess

Would turn it thither. Wherefore
now the Queen

In this low pulse and palsy of the
state,

Bad me to tell you that she counts
on you

And on myself as her two hands; on
you,

In your own city, as her right, my
Lord,

For you are loyal.

White. Am I Thomas White?
One word before she comes. Eliza-
beth—

Her name is much abused among
these traitors.

Where is she? She is loved by all of
us.

I scarce have heart to mingle in this
matter,

If she should be mishar'dled.

Howard. No; she shall not.

The Queen had written her word to
come to court:

Methought I smelt out Renard in the
letter,

And fearing for her, sent a secret
missive,

Which told her to be sick. Happily
or not,

It found her sick indeed.

White. God send her well;
Here comes her Royal Grace.

Enter Guards, MARY, and GARDINER. SIR THOMAS WHITE leads her to a raised seat on the dais.

White. I, the Lord Mayor, and
these our companies

And guilds of London, gathered here,
beseech

Your Highness to accept our lowliest
thanks

For your most princely presence;
and we pray

That we, your true and loyal citi-
zens,

From your own royal lips, at once
may know

The wherefore of this coming, and so
learn

Your royal will, and do it.—I, Lord
Mayor

Of London, and our guilds and com-
panies.

Mary. In mine own person am I
come to you,

To tell you what indeed ye see and
know,

How traitorously these rebels out of
Kent

Have made strong head against our-
selves and you.

They would not have me wed the
Prince of Spain;

That was their pretext—so they spake
at first—

But we sent divers of our Council to
them,

And by their answers to the question
ask'd,

It doth appear this marriage is the
least

Of all their quarrel.

They have betrayed the treason of
their hearts:

Seek to possess our person, hold our
 Tower,
 Place and displace our councillors,
 and use
 Both us and them according as they
 will.
 Now what I am ye know right well—
 your Queen;
 To whom, when I was wedded to the
 realm
 And the realm's laws (the spousal
 ring whereof,
 Not ever to be laid aside, I wear
 Upon this finger), ye did promise full
 Allegiance and obedience to the
 death.
 Ye know my father was the rightful
 heir
 Of England, and his right came down
 to me,
 Corroborate by your acts of Parlia-
 ment:
 And as ye were most loving unto him,
 So doubtless will ye show yourselves
 to me.
 Wherefore, ye will not brook that
 anyone
 Should seize our person, occupy our
 state,
 More specially a traitor so presump-
 tuous
 As this same Wyatt, who hath tam-
 per'd with
 A public ignorance, and, under color
 Of such a cause as hath no color,
 seeks
 To bend the laws to his own will, and
 yield
 Full scope to persons rascal and fur-
 lorn,
 To make free spoil and havoc of
 your goods.
 Now as your Prince, I say,
 I, that was never mother, cannot tell
 How mothers love their children; yet,
 methinks,
 A prince as naturally may love his
 people
 As these their children; and be sure
 your Queen
 So loves you, and so loving, needs
 must deem
 This love by you return'd as heartily;

And thro' this common knot and bond
 of love,
 Doubt not they will be speedily over-
 thrown.
 As to this marriage, ye shall under-
 stand
 We made thereto no treaty of our-
 selves,
 And set no foot theretoward unadvised
 Of all our Privy Council; further-
 more,
 This marriage had the assent of those
 to whom
 The king, my father, did commit his
 trust;
 Who not alone esteem'd it honorable,
 But for the wealth and glory of our
 realm,
 And all our loving subjects, most ex-
 pedient.
 As to myself,
 I am not so set on wedlock as to
 choose
 But where I list, nor yet so amorous
 That I must needs be husbanded; I
 thank God,
 I have lived a virgin, and I noway
 doubt
 But that with God's grace, I can live
 so still.
 Yet if it might please God that I should
 leave
 Some fruit of mine own body after
 me,
 To be your king, ye would rejoice
 thereat,
 And it would be your comfort, as I
 trust;
 And truly, if I either thought or knew
 This marriage should bring loss or
 danger to you,
 My subjects, or impair in any way
 This royal state of England, I would
 never
 Consent thereto, nor marry while I
 live;
 Moreover, if this marriage should not
 seem,
 Before our own High Court of Parlia-
 ment,
 To be of rich advantage to our realm,
 We will refrain, and not alone from
 this,

Likewise from any other, out of which
Looms the least chance of peril to our realm.

Wherefore be bold, and with your lawful Prince

Stand fast against our enemies and yours,

And fear them not. I fear them not.

My Lord,

I leave Lord William Howard in your city,

To guard and keep you whole and safe from all

The spoil and sackage aim'd at by these rebels,

Who mouth and foam against the Prince of Spain.

Voices. Long live Queen Mary!

Down with Wyatt!

The Queen!

White. Three voices from our guilds and companies!

You are shy and proud like Englishmen, my masters,

And will not trust your voices. Understand:

Your lawful Prince hath come to cast herself

On loyal hearts and bosoms, hoped to fall

Into the wide-spread arms of fealty, And finds you statues. Speak at once—and all!

For whom?

Our sovereign Lady by King Harry's will;

The Queen of England—or the Kentish Squire?

I know you loyal. Speak! in the name of God!

The Queen of England or the rabble of Kent?

The reeking dungfork master of the mace!

Your havings wasted by the scythe and spade—

Your rights and charters hobnail'd into slush—

Your houses fired—your gutters bubbling blood—

Acclamation. No! No! The Queen! the Queen!

White. Your Highness hears This burst and bass of loyal harmony, And how we each and all of us abhor The venomous, bestial, devilish revolt Of Thomas Wyatt. Hear us now make oath

To raise your Highness thirty thousand men,

And arm and strike as with one hand, and brush

This Wyatt from our shoulders, like a flea

That might have leapt upon us unawares.

Swear with me, noble fellow-citizens, all,

With all your trades, and guilds, and companies.

Citizens. We swear!

Mary. We thank your Lordship and your loyal city.

[*Exit Mary attended.*]

White. I trust this day, thro' God, I have saved the crown.

First Alderman. Ay, so my Lord of Pembroke in command

Of all her force be safe; but there are doubts.

Second Alderman. I hear that Gardiner, coming with the Queen,

And meeting Pembroke, bent to his saddle-bow,

As if to win the man by flattering him. Is he so safe to fight upon her side?

First Alderman. If not, there's no man safe.

White. Yes, Thomas White. I am safe enough; no man need flatter me.

Second Alderman. Nay, no man need; but did you mark our Queen?

The color freely play'd into her face,

And the half sight which makes her look so stern,

Seem'd thro' that dim dilated world of hers,

To read our faces; I have never seen her

So queently or so goodly.

White. Courage, sir, That makes our man or woman look their goodliest.

Die like the torn fox dumb, but never whine
Like that poor heart, Northumberland,
at the block.

Bagenhall. The man had children,
and he whined for those.
Methinks most men are but poor-
hearted, else
Should we so doat on courage, were it
commoner?

The Queen stands up, and speaks for
her own self;
And all men cry, She is queenly, she
is goodly.

Yet she's no goodlier; tho' my Lord
Mayor here,
By his own rule, he hath been so bold
to-day,
Should look more goodly than the
rest of us.

White. Goodly? I feel most
goodly heart and hand,
And strong to throw ten Wyatts and
all Kent.

Ha! ha! sir; but you jest; I love it:
a jest
In time of danger shows the pulses
even.

Be merry! yet, Sir Ralph, you look
but sad.

I dare avouch you'd stand up for
yourself,
Tho' all the world should bay like
winter wolves.

Bagenhall. Who knows? the man
is proven by the hour.

White. The man should make the
hour, not this the man;
And Thomas White will prove this
Thomas Wyatt.

And he will prove an Iden to this Cade,
And he will play the Walworth to
this Wat;

Come, sirs, we prate; hence all—
gather your men—

Myself must bustle. Wyatt comes to
Southwark;

I'll have the drawbridge hewn into the
Thames,
And see the citizens arm'd. Good
day; good day. [*Exit White.*]

Bagenhall. One of much outdoor
bluster.

Howard. For all that,
Most honest, brave, and skilful; and
his wealth
A fountain of perennial alms—his
fault

So thoroughly to believe in his own
self.

Bagenhall. Yet thoroughly to be-
lieve in one's own self,
So one's own self be thorough, were
to do

Great things, my Lord.

Howard. It may be.

Bagenhall. I have heard
One of your Council flee and jeer at
him.

Howard. The nursery-cocker'd
child will jeer at aught
That may seem strange beyond his
nursery.

The statesman that shall jeer and
flee at men,

Makes enemies for himself and for
his king;

And if he jeer not seeing the true
man

Behind his folly, he is thrice the fool;
And if he see the man and still will
jeer,

He is child and fool, and traitor to
the State.

Who is he? let me shun him.

Bagenhall. Nay, my Lord,
He is damn'd enough already.

Howard. I must set
The guard at Ludgate. Fare you well,
Sir Ralph.

Bagenhall. 'Who knows?' I am
for England. But who knows,
That knows the Queen, the Spaniard,
and the Pope,

Whether I be for Wyatt, or the
Queen? [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.—LONDON BRIDGE.

*Enter SIR THOMAS WYATT and
BRETT.*

Wyatt. Brett, when the Duke of
Norfolk moved against us



"BY THAT OLD BRIDGE WHICH, HALF IN RUINS THEN,"—Page 123.



Thou cried'st 'A Wyatt!' and flying
to our side
Left his all bare, for which I love
thee, Brett.

Have for thine asking aught that I
can give,
For thro' thine help we are come to
London Bridge;

But how to cross it balks me. I fear
we cannot.

Brett. Nay, hardly, save by boat,
swimming, or wings.

Wyatt. Last night I climb'd into
the gate-house, Brett,

And scared the gray old porter and
his wife.

And then I crept along the gloom and
saw

They had hewn the drawbridge down
into the river.

It roll'd as black as death; and that
same tide

Which, coming with our coming,
seem'd to smile

And sparkle like our fortune as thou
saidest,

Ran sunless down, and moan'd
against the piers.

But o'er the chasm I saw Lord Wil-
liam Howard

By torchlight, and his guard; four
guns gaped at me,

Black, silent mouths: had Howard
spied me there

And made them speak, as well he
might have done,

Their voice had left me none to tell
you this.

What shall we do?

Brett. On somehow. To go back
were to lose all.

Wyatt. On, over London Bridge
We cannot: stay we cannot; there is
ordnance

On the White Tower and on the
Devil's Tower,

And pointed full at Southwark; we
must round

By Kingston Bridge.

Brett. Ten miles about.

Wyatt. Ev'n so.

But I have notice from our parti-
sans

Within the city that they will stand
by us
If Ludgate can be reach'd by dawn to-
morrow.

Enter one of WYATT's men.

Man. Sir Thomas, I've found this
paper; pray your worship read it; I
know not my letters; the old priests
taught me nothing.

Wyatt (reads). 'Whosoever will
apprehend the traitor Thomas Wyatt
shall have a hundred pounds for re-
ward.'

Man. Is that it? That's a big lot
of money.

Wyatt. Ay, ay, my friend; not read
it? 'tis not written
Half plain enough. Give me a piece
of paper!

[Writes 'THOMAS WYATT' large.
There, any man can read that.

[Sticks it in his cap.

Brett. But that's foolhardy.

Wyatt. No! boldness, which will
give my followers boldness.

Enter MAN with a prisoner.

Man. We found him, your wor-
ship, a plundering o' Bishop Winches-
ter's house; he say's he's a poor
gentleman.

Wyatt. Gentleman! a thief! Go
hang him. Shall we make
Those that we come to serve our
sharpest foes?

Brett. Sir Thomas—

Wyatt. Hang him, I say.
Brett. Wyatt, but now you prom-
ised me a boon.

Wyatt. Ay, and I warrant this fine
fellow's life,

Brett. Ev'n so; he was my neigh-
bor once in Kent,

He's poor enough, has drunk and
gambled out

All that he had, and gentleman he
was.

We have been glad together; let him
live.

Wyatt. He has gambled for his
life, and lost, he hangs.

No, no, my word's my word. Take
thy poor gentleman!
Gamble thyself at once out of my
sight,
Or I will dig thee with my dagger.
Away!
Women and children!

Enter a Crowd of WOMEN and Children.

First Woman. O Sir Thomas, Sir Thomas, pray you go away, Sir Thomas, or you'll make the White Tower a black 'un for us this blessed day. He'll be the death on us; and you'll set the Devil's Tower a-spitting, and he'll smash all our bits o' things worse than Philip o' Spain.

Second Woman. Don't ye now go to think that we be for Philip o' Spain.

Third Woman. No, we know that ye be come to kill the Queen, and we'll pray for you all on our bended knees. But o' God's mercy don't ye kill the Queen here, Sir Thomas; look ye, here's little Dickon, and little Robin, and little Jenny—though she's but a side-cousin—and all on our knees, we pray you to kill the Queen further off, Sir Thomas.

Wyatt. My friends, I have not come to kill the Queen
Or here or there: I come to save you all,

And I'll go further off.

Crowd. Thanks, Sir Thomas, we be beholden to you, and we'll pray for you on our bended knees till our lives' end.

Wyatt. Be happy, I am your friend. To Kingston, forward!
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.—ROOM IN THE GATEHOUSE OF WESTMINSTER PALACE.

MARY, ALICE, GARDINER, RENARD, LADIES.

Gardiner. Their cry is, Philip never shall be king.

Mary. Lord Pembroke in command of all our force

Will front their cry and shatter them into dust.

Alice. Was not Lord Pembroke with Northumberland?

O madam, if this Pembroke should be false?

Mary. No, girl; most brave and loyal, brave and loyal.

His breaking with Northumberland broke Northumberland.

At the park gate he hovers with our guards.

These Kentish ploughmen cannot break the guards.

Enter MESSENGER.

Messenger. Wyatt, your Grace, hath broken thro' the guards
And gone to Ludgate.

Gardiner. Madam, I much fear That all is lost; but we can save your Grace.

The river still is free. I do beseech you,

There yet is time, take boat and pass to Windsor.

Mary. I pass to Windsor and I lose my crown.

Gardiner. Pass, then, I pray your Highness, to the Tower.

Mary. I shall but be their prisoner in the Tower.

Cries without. The traitor! treason! Pembroke!

Ladies. Treason! treason!

Mary. Peace.

False to Northumberland, is he false to me?

Bear witness, Renard, that I live and die

The true and faithful bride of Philip—
—A sound

Of feet and voices thickening hither—
blows—

Hark, there is battle at the palace gates,

And I will out upon the gallery.

Ladies. No, no, your Grace; see there the arrows flying.

Mary. I am Harry's daughter, Tudor, and not Fear.

[*Goes out on the gallery.*]

The guards are all driven in, skulk
into corners
Like rabbits to their holes. A gra-
cious guard
Truly; shame on them! they have
shut the gates!

Enter SIR ROBERT SOUTHWELL.

Southwell. The porter, please your
Grace, hath shut the gates
On friend and foe. Your gentlemen-
at-arms,
If this be not your Grace's order, cry
To have the gates set wide again, and
they
With their good battleaxes will do
you right
Against all traitors.

Mary. They are the flower of Eng-
land; set the gates wide.

[Exit Southwell.]

Enter COURTENAY.

Courtenay. All lost, all lost, all
yielded! A barge, a barge!
The Queen must to the Tower.

Mary. Whence come you, sir?

Courtenay. From Charing Cross;
the rebels broke us there,
And I sped hither with what haste I
might

To save my royal cousin.

Mary. Where is Pembroke?

Courtenay. I left him somewhere
in the thick of it.

Mary. Left him and fled; and
thou that wouldst be King,
And hast not heart nor honor. I my-
self

Will down into the battle and there bide
The upshot of my quarrel, or die with
those

That are no cowards and no Courte-
nays.

Courtenay. I do not love your
Grace should call me coward.

Enter another MESSENGER.

Messenger. Over, your Grace, all
crush'd; the brave Lord Wil-
liam

Thrust him from Ludgate, and the
traitor flying

To Temple Bar, there by Sir Maurice
Berkeley

Was taken prisoner.

Mary. To the Tower with him!

Messenger. 'Tis said he told Sir
Maurice there was one
Cognizant of this, and party there-
unto,

My Lord of Devon.

Mary. To the Tower with him!

Courtenay. O la, the Tower, the
Tower, always the Tower,
I shall grow into it—I shall be the
Tower.

Mary. Your Lordship may not
have so long to wait.

Remove him!

Courtenay. La, to whistle out my
life,
And carve my coat upon the walls
again!

[Exit Courtenay guarded.]

Messenger. Also this Wyatt did
confess the Princess
Cognizant thereof, and party there-
unto.

Mary. What? whom—whom did
you say?

Messenger. Elizabeth,
Your Royal sister.

Mary. To the Tower with her!
My foes are at my feet and I am
Queen.

*[Gardiner and her Ladies kneel to
her.]*

Gardiner (rising). There let them
lie, your footstool! *(Aside.)*
Can I strike

Elizabeth?—not now and save the life
Of Devon: if I save him, he and his
Are bound to me—may strike here-
after.

(Aloud.) Madam,

What Wyatt said, or what they said
he said,

Cries of the moment and the street—
Mary. He said it.

Gardiner. Your courts of justice
will determine that.

Renard (advancing). I trust by this
your Highness will allow

Some spice of wisdom in my telling
 you,
 When last we talk'd, that Philip would
 not come
 Till Guildford Dudley and the Duke
 of Suffolk,
 And Lady Jane had left us.
Mary. They shall die.
Renard. And your so loving sister?
Mary. She shall die.
 My foes are at my feet, and Philip
 King. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT III.

SCENE I.—THE CONDUIT IN
GRACE-CHURCH,

*Painted with the Nine Worthies, among
 them King Henry VIII. holding a
 book, on it inscribed 'Verbum Dei.'*

Enter SIR RALPH BAGENHALL *and*
 SIR THOMAS STAFFORD.

Bagenhall. A hundred here and
 hundreds hang'd in Kent.
 The tigress had unsheath'd her nails
 at last,
 And Renard and the Chancellor
 sharpen'd them.
 In every London street a gibbet stood.
 They are down to-day. Here by this
 house was one;
 The traitor husband dangled at the
 door,
 And when the traitor wife came out
 for bread
 To still the petty treason therewithin,
 Her cap would brush his heels.

Stafford. It is Sir Ralph,
 And muttering to himself as hereto-
 fore.

Sir, see you aught up yonder?

Bagenhall. I miss something.
 The tree that only bears dead fruit is
 gone.

Stafford. What tree, sir?

Bagenhall. Well, the tree in
 Virgil, sir,

That bears not its own apples.

Stafford. What! the gallows?

Bagenhall. Sir, this dead fruit was
 ripening overmuch,
 And had to be removed lest living
 Spain
 Should sicken at dead England.

Stafford. Not so dead,
 But that a shock may rouse her.

Bagenhall. I believe
 Sir Thomas Stafford?

Stafford. I am ill disguised.

Bagenhall. Well, are you not in
 peril here?

Stafford. I think so.
 I came to feel the pulse of England,
 whether

It beats hard at this marriage. Did
 you see it?

Bagenhall. Stafford, I am a sad
 man and a serious.

Far liefer had I in my country hall
 Been reading some old book, with
 mine old hound

Couch'd at my hearth, and mine old
 flask of wine

Beside me, than have seen it: yet I
 saw it.

Stafford. Good, was it splendid?

Bagenhall. Ay, if Dukes, and
 Earls,

And Counts, and sixty Spanish cava-
 liers,

Some six or seven Bishops, diamonds,
 pearls,

That royal commonplace too, cloth of
 gold,

Could make it so.

Stafford. And what was Mary's
 dress?

Bagenhall. Good faith, I was too
 sorry for the woman

To mark the dress. She wore red
 shoes!

Stafford. Red shoes!

Bagenhall. Scarlet, as if her feet
 were wash'd in blood,

As if she had waded in it.

Stafford. Were your eyes
 So hashful that you look'd no higher?

Bagenhall. A diamond,
 And Philip's gift, as proof of Philip's

love,

Who hath not any for any,—tho' a
 true one,

Blazed false upon her heart.

Stafford. But this proud Prince—

Bagenhall. Nay, he is King, you know, the King of Naples.

The father ceded Naples, that the son

Being a King, might wed a Queen,—

O he

Flamed in brocade—white satin his

trunk-hose,

Inwrought with silver,—on his neck a

collar,

Gold, thick with diamonds; hanging

down from this

The Golden Fleece—and round his

knee, misplaced,

Our English Garter, studded with

great emeralds,

Rubies, I know not what. Have you

had enough

Of all this gear?

Stafford. Ay, since you hate the

telling it.

How look'd the Queen?

Bagenhall. No fairer for her

jewels.

And I could see that as the new-made

couple

Came from the Minster, moving side

by side

Beneath one canopy, ever and anon

She cast on him a vassal smile of love,

Which Philip with a glance of some

distaste,

Or so methought, return'd. I may be

wrong, sir.

This marriage will not hold.

Stafford. I think with you.

The King of France will help to break

it.

Bagenhall. France!

We once had half of France, and

hurl'd our battles

Into the heart of Spain; but England

now

Is but a ball chuck'd between France

and Spain,

His in whose hand she drops; Harry

of Bolingbroke

Had holpen Richard's tottering throne

to stand,

Could Harry have foreseen that all

our nobles

Would perish on the civil slaughter-

field,

And leave the people naked to the

crown,

And the crown naked to the people;

the crown

Female, too! Sir, no woman's regi-

men

Can save us. We are fallen, and as I

think,

Never to rise again.

Stafford. You are too black-

blooded.

I'd make a move myself to hinder

that:

I know some lusty fellows there in

France.

Bagenhall. You would but make

us weaker, Thomas Stafford.

Wyatt was a good soldier, yet he

fail'd,

And strengthen'd Philip.

Stafford. Did not his last breath

Clear Courtenay and the Princess

from the charge

Of being his co-rebels?

Bagenhall. Ay, but then

What such a one as Wyatt says is

nothing:

We have no men among us. The

new Lords

Are quieted with their sop of Abbey-

lands,

And ev'n before the Queen's face

Gardiner buys them

With Philip's gold. All greed, no

faith, no courage!

Why, ev'n the haughty prince, North-

umberland,

The leader of our Reformation, knelt

And blubber'd like a lad, and on the

scaffold

Recanted, and resold himself to

Rome.

Stafford. I swear you do your

country wrong, Sir Ralph.

I know a set of exiles over there,

Dare-devils, that would eat fire and

spit it out

At Philip's beard: they pillage Spain

already.

The French King winks at it. An

hour will come

When they will sweep her from the seas. No men?
Did not Lord Suffolk die like a true man?

Is not Lord William Howard a true man?

Yea, you yourself, altho' you are black-blooded:

And I, by God, believe myself a man.

Ay, even in the church there is a man—Craumer.

Fly would he not, when all men bad him fly.

And what a letter he wrote against the Pope!

There's a brave man, if any.

Bagenhall. Ay; if it hold.

Crowd (coming on). God save their Graces!

Stafford. Bagenhall, I see The Tudor green and white. (*Trumpets.*) They are coming now.

And here's a crowd as thick as her-
ring-shoals.

Bagenhall. Be limpets to this pil-
lar, or we are torn

Down the strong wave of brawlers.

Crowd. God save their Graces!

[*Procession of Trumpeters, Jave-
linmen, etc.; then Spanish and
Flemish Nobles intermingled.*

Stafford. Worth seeing, Bagenhall!

These black dog-Dons

Garb themselves bravely. Who's the
long-face there,

Looks very Spain of very Spain?

Bagenhall. The Duke

Of Alva, an iron soldier.

Stafford. And the Dutchman,

Now laughing at some jest?

Bagenhall. William of Orange,

William the Silent.

Stafford. Why do they call him so?

Bagenhall. He keeps, they say,
some secret that may cost

Philip his life.

Stafford. But then he looks so
merry.

Bagenhall. I cannot tell you why
they call him so.

[*The King and Queen pass,
attended by Peers of the Realm,*

*Officers of State, etc., Cannon
shot off.*

Crowd. Philip and Mary, Philip
and Mary!

Long live the King and Queen, Philip
and Mary!

Stafford. They smile as if content
with one another.

Bagenhall. A smile abroad is oft a
scowl at home.

[*King and Queen pass on. Procession.*

First Citizen. I thought this Philip
had been one of those black devils of
Spain, but he hath a yellow beard.

Second Citizen. Not red like Iscar-
iot's.

First Citizen. Like a carrot's, as
thou say'st, and English carrot's bet-
ter than Spanish licorice; but I
thought he was a beast.

Third Citizen. Certain I had
heard that every Spaniard carries a
tail like a devil under his trunk-hose.

Tailor. Ay, but see what trunk-
hoses! Lord! they be fine; I never
stitch'd none such. They make
amends for the tails.

Fourth Citizen. Tut! every Span-
ish priest will tell you that all English
heretics have tails.

Fifth Citizen. Death and the Devil
—if he find I have one—

Fourth Citizen. Lo! thou hast
call'd them up! here they come—a
pale horse for Death and Gardiner for
the Devil.

*Enter GARDINER (turning back from
the procession).*

Gardiner. Knave, wilt thou wear
thy cap before the Queen.

Man. My Lord, I stand so
squeezed among the crowd.

I cannot lift my hands unto my head.

Gardiner. Knock off his cap there,
some of you about him!

See there be others that can use their
hands.

Thou art one of Wyatt's men?

Man. No, my Lord, no.

Gardiner. Thy name, thou knave?

Man. I am nobody, my Lord.

Gardiner (shouting). God's passion! knave, thy name?

Man. I have ears to hear.

Gardiner. Ay, rascal, if I leave thee ears to hear.

Find out his name and bring it me (to Attendant).

Attendant. Ay, my Lord.

Gardiner. Knave, thou shalt lose thine ears and find thy tongue, And shalt be thankful if I leave thee that.

[*Coming before the Conduit.* The conduit painted—the nine worthies—ay!

But then what's here? King Harry with a scroll.

Ha—*Verbum Dei*—*verbum*—word of God!

God's passion! do you know the knave that painted it?

Attendant. I do, my Lord.

Gardiner. Tell him to paint it out, And put some fresh device in lieu of it—

A pair of gloves, a pair of gloves, sir; ha?

There is no heresy there.

Attendant. I will, my Lord; The man shall paint a pair of gloves.

I am sure

(Knowing the man) he wrought it ignorantly,

And not from any malice.

Gardiner. Word of God In English! over this the brainless loons

That cannot spell *Esaiās* from St. Paul,

Make themselves drunk and mad, fly out and flare

Into rebellions. I'll have their bibles burnt.

The bible is the priest's. Ay! fellow, what!

Stand staring at me! shout, you gaping rogue!

Man. I have, my Lord, shouted till I am hoarse.

Gardiner. What hast thou shouted, knave?

Man. Long live Queen Mary!

Gardiner. Knave, there be two.

There be both King and Queen, Philip and Mary. Shout!

Man. Nay, but, my Lord, The Queen comes first, Mary and Philip.

Gardiner. Shout, then, Mary and Philip!

Man. Mary and Philip!

Gardiner. Now, Thou hast shouted for thy pleasure, shout for mine!

Philip and Mary!

Man. Must it be so, my Lord?

Gardiner. Ay, knave.

Man. Philip and Mary!

Gardiner. I distrust thee. Thine is a half voice and a lean assent. What is thy name?

Man. Sanders.

Gardiner. What else?

Man. Zerubbabel.

Gardiner. Where dost thou live?

Man. In Cornhill.

Gardiner. Where, knave, where?

Man. Sign of the Talbot.

Gardiner. Come to me to-morrow.—

Rascal!—this land is like a hill of fire, One crater opens when another shuts. But so I get the laws against the heretic,

Spite of Lord Paget and Lord William Howard,

And others of our Parliament, revived, I will show fire on my side—stake and fire—

Sharp work and short. The knaves are easily cow'd.

Follow their Majesties.

[*Exit. The crowd following.*

Bagenhall. As proud as Becket.

Stafford. You would not have him murder'd as Becket was?

Bagenhall. No—murder fathers murder: but I say

There is no man—there was one woman with us—

It was a sin to love her married, dead I cannot choose but love her.

Stafford. Lady Jane?

Crowd (going off). God save their Graces!

Stafford. Did you see her die?
Bagenhall. No, no; her innocent
 blood had blinded me.

You call me too black-blooded—true
 enough

Her dark dead blood is in my heart
 with mine.

If ever I cry out against the Pope
 Her dark dead blood that ever moves
 with mine

Will stir the living tongue and make
 the cry.

Stafford. Yet doubtless you can tell
 me how she died?

Bagenhall. Seventeen—and knew
 eight languages—in music
 Peerless—her needle perfect, and her
 learning

Beyond the churchmen; yet so meek,
 so modest,

So wife-like humble to the trivial boy
 Mismatch'd with her for policy! I
 have heard

She would not take a last farewell of
 him,

She fear'd it might unman him for
 his end.

She could not be unmann'd—no, nor
 outwoman'd—

Seventeen—a rose of grace!
 Girl never breathed to rival such a
 rose;

Rose never blew that equal'd such a
 bud.

Stafford. Pray you go on.
Bagenhall. She came upon the
 scaffold,

And said she was condemn'd to die
 for treason;

She had but follow'd the device of
 those

Her nearest kin: she thought they
 knew the laws.

But for herself, she knew but little
 law,

And nothing of the titles to the
 crown;

She had no desire for that, and wrung
 her hands,

And trusted God would save her thro'
 the blood

Of Jesus Christ alone.

Stafford. Pray you go on.

Bagenhall. Then knelt and said
 the Miserere Mei—

But all in English, mark you; rose
 again,

And, when the headsman pray'd to be
 forgiven,

Said 'You will give me my true
 crown at last,

But do it quickly;' then all wept but
 she,

Who changed not color when she
 saw the block,

But ask'd him, childlike: 'Will you
 take it off

Before I lay me down?' 'No, madam,'
 he said,

Gasping; and when her innocent eyes
 were bound,

She, with her poor blind hands feeling
 —'where is it?

Where is it?'—You must fancy that
 which follow'd,

If you have heart to do it!

Crowd (in the distance). God save
 their Graces!

Stafford. Their Graces, our dis-
 graces! God confound them!

Why, she's grown bloodier! when I
 last was here,

This was against her conscience—
 would be murder!

Bagenhall. The 'Thou shalt do no
 murder,' which God's hand

Wrote on her conscience, Mary rubb'd
 out pale—

She could not make it white—and
 over that,

Traced in the blackest text of Hell—
 'Thou shalt!'

And sign'd it—Mary!

Stafford. Philip and the Pope
 Must have sign'd too. I hear this

Legate's coming
 To bring us absolution from the
 Pope.

The Lords and Commons will bow
 down before him—

You are of the house? what will you
 do, Sir Ralph?

Bagenhall. And why should I be
 bolder than the rest,

Or honestier than all?

Stafford. But, sir, if I—

And oversea they say this state of
yours
Hath no more mortice than a tower
of cards;
And that a puff would do it—then if I
And others made that move I touch'd
upon,
Back'd by the power of France, and
landing here,
Came with a sudden splendor, shout,
and show,
And dazzled men and deafen'd by
some bright
Load venture, and the people so
unquiet—
And I the race of murder'd Bucking-
ham—
Not for myself, but for 'the king-
dom—Sir,
I trust that you would fight along
with us.

Bagenhall. No; you would fling
your lives into the gulf.

Stafford. But if this Philip, as he's
like to do,
Left Mary a wife-widow here alone,
Set up a viceroy, sent his myriads
hither
To seize upon the forts and fleet, and
make us
A Spanish province; would you not
fight then?

Bagenhall. I think I should fight
then.

Stafford. I am sure of it.
Hist! there's the face coming on here
of one
Who knows me. I must leave you.

Fare you well,
You'll hear of me again.

Bagenhall. Upon the scaffold.
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—ROOM IN WHITEHALL
PALACE.

MARY. *Enter PHILIP and
CARDINAL POLE.*

Pole. Ave Maria, gratia plena,
Benedicta tu in mulieribus.

Mary. Loyal and royal cousin,
humblest thanks.

Had you a pleasant voyage up the
river?

Pole. We had your royal barge,
and that same chair,
Or rather throne of purple, on the
deck.

Our silver cross sparkled before the
prow,
The ripples twinkled at their diamond-
dance,

The boats that follow'd, were as
glowing-gay
As regal gardens; and your flocks of
swans,

As fair and white as angels; and
your shores

Wore in mine eyes the green of Par-
adise.

My foreign friends, who dream'd us
blanketed

In ever-closing fog, were much
amazed

To find as fair a sun as might have
flash'd

Upon their lake of Garda, fire the
Thames;

Our voyage by sea was all but miracle;
And here the river flowing from the
sea,

Not toward it (for they thought not
of our tides),

Seem'd as a happy miracle to make
glide—

In quiet—home your banish'd coun-
tryman.

Mary. We heard that you were
sick in Flanders, cousin.

Pole. A dizziness.

Mary. And how came you
round again?

Pole. The scarlet thread of Rahab
saved her life;
And mine, a little letting of the
blood.

Mary. Well? now?

Pole. Ay, cousin, as the
heathen giant

Had but to touch the ground, his
force return'd—

Thus, after twenty years of banish-
ment,

Feeling my native land beneath my
foot,

I said thereto: 'Ah, native land of mine,
Thou art much beholden to this foot of mine,
That hastes with full commission from the Pope
To absolve thee from thy guilt of heresy.

Thou hast disgraced me and attained me,
And mark'd me ev'n as Cain, and I return
As Peter, but to bless thee: make me well.'

Methinks the good land heard me,
for to-day
My heart beats twenty, when I see you, cousin.

Ah, gentle cousin, since your Herod's death,

How oft hath Peter knock'd at Mary's gate!

And Mary would have risen and let him in,

But, Mary, there were those within the house

Who would not have it.

Mary. True, good cousin Pole;
And there were also those without the house

Who would not have it.

Pole. I believe so, cousin.
State-policy and church-policy are conjoint,

But Janus-faces looking diverse ways.
I fear the Emperor much misvalued me.

But all is well; 'twas ev'n the will of God,

Who, waiting till the time had ripen'd, now,

Makes me his mouth of holy greeting.

'Hail,
Daughter of God, and saver of the faith.

Sit benedictus fructus ventris tui!'

Mary. Ah, heaven!

Pole. Unwell, your Grace?

Mary. No, cousin, happy—
Happy to see you; never yet so happy

Since I was crown'd.

Pole. Sweet cousin, you forget

That long low minster where you gave your hand
To this great Catholic King.

Philip. Well said, Lord Legate.

Mary. Nay, not well said; I thought of you, my liege,
Ev'n as I spoke.

Philip. Ay, Madam; my Lord Paget

Waits to present our Council to the Legate.

Sit down here, all; Madam, between us you.

Pole. Lo, now you are enclosed with boards of cedar,

Our little sister of the Song of Songs!

You are doubly fenced and shielded sitting here

Between the two most high-set thrones on earth,

The Emperor's highness happily symbol'd by

The King your husband, the Pope's Holiness

By mine own self.

Mary. True, cousin, I am happy.

When will you that we summon both our houses

To take this absolution from your lips,

And be regather'd to the Papal fold?

Pole. In Britain's calendar the brightest day

Beheld our rough forefathers break their Gods,

And clasp the faith in Christ; but after that

Might not St. Andrew's be her happiest day?

Mary. Then these shall meet upon St. Andrew's day.

Enter PAGET, who presents the Council. Dumb show.

Pole. I am an old man wearied with my journey,

Ev'n with my joy. Permit me to withdraw.

To Lambeth?

Philip. Ay, Lambeth has ousted Cranmer.

It was not meet the heretic swine
should live
In Lambeth.

Mary. There or anywhere, or at all.

Philip. We have had it swept and
garnish'd after him.

Pole. Not for the seven devils to
enter in?

Philip. No, for we trust they
parted in the swine.

Pole. True, and I am the Angel of
the Pope.

Farewell, your Graces.

Philip. Nay, not here—to me;
I will go with you to the waterside.

Pole. Not be my Charon to the
counterside?

Philip. No, my Lord Legate, the
Lord Chancellor goes.

Pole. And unto no dead world;
but Lambeth palace,

Henceforth a centre of the living
faith.

[*Exeunt Philip, Pole, Paget, etc.*]

Manet Mary.

Mary. He hath awaked! he hath
awaked!

He stirs within the darkness!

Oh, Philip, husband! now thy love
to mine

Will cling more close, and those bleak
manners thaw,

That make me shamed and tongue-
tied in my love.

The second Prince of Peace—

The great unborn defender of the
Faith,

Who will avenge me of mine enemies—

He comes, and my star rises,

The stormy Wyatts and Northumber-
lands,

The proud ambitions of Elizabeth,
And all her fieriest partisans—are pale

Before my star!

The light of this new learning wanes

and dies:

The ghost of Luther and Zuinglius
fade

Into the deathless hell which is their
doom

Before my star!

His sceptre shall go forth from Ind to
Ind!

His sword shall hew the heretic peo-
ples down!

His faith shall clothe the world that
will be his,

Like universal air and sunshine!
Open,

Ye everlasting gates! The King is
here!—

My star, my son!

Enter PHILIP, DUKE OF ALVA, etc.

Oh, Philip, come with me;
Good news have I to tell you, news to

make
Both of us happy—ay, the Kingdom
too.

Nay come with me—one moment!

Philip (to Alva). More than
that:

There was one here of late—William
the Silent

They call him—he is free enough in
talk,

But tells me nothing. You will be,
we trust,

Sometime the viceroy of those prov-
inces—

He must deserve his surname better.

Alva. Ay, sir;
Inherit the Great Silence.

Philip. True; the provinces
Are hard to rule and must be hardly

ruled;
Most fruitful, yet, indeed, an empty

rind,
All hollow'd out with stinging here-
sies;

And for their heresies, Alva, they
will fight;

You must break them or they break
you.

Alva (proudly). The first.

Philip. Good!

Well, Madam, this new happiness of
mine? [*Exeunt.*]

Enter THREE PAGES.

First Page. News, mates! a mira-
cle, a miracle! news!

The bells must ring; Te Deums must
be sung;
The Queen hath felt the motion of her
babe!

Second Page. Ay; but see here!

First Page. See what?

Second Page. This paper, Dickon.
I found it fluttering at the palace
gates:—

'The Queen of England is delivered
of a dead dog!'

Third Page. These are the things
that madden her. Fie upon it!

First Page. Ay; but I hear she
hath a dropsy, lad,

Or a high-dropsy, as the doctors call it.

Third Page. Fie on her dropsy, so
she have a dropsy!

I know that she was ever sweet to me.

First Page. For thou and thine are
Roman to the core.

Third Page. So thou and thine
must be. Take heed!

First Page. Not I,

And whether this flash of news be
false or true,

So the wine run, and there be revelry,
Content am I. Let all the steeples
clash,

Till the sun dance, as upon Easter
Day. *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE III.—GREAT HALL IN WHITEHALL.

*At the far end a dais. On this three
chairs, two under one canopy for
MARY and PHILIP, another on the
right of these for POLE. Under
the dais on POLE's side, ranged
along the wall, sit all the Spiritual
Peers, and along the wall
opposite, all the Temporal. The
Commons on cross benches in front,
a line of approach to the dais be-
tween them. In the foreground,
SIR RALPH BAGENHALL and other
Members of the Commons.*

First Member. St. Andrew's day;
sit close, sit close, we are
friends.

Is reconciled the word? the Pope
again?

It must be thus; and yet, cocksbody!
how strange

That Gardiner, once so one with all of
us

Against this foreign marriage, should
have yielded

So utterly!—strange! but stranger
still that he,

So fierce against the Headship of the
Pope,

Should play the second actor in this
pageant

That brings him in; such aameleon
he!

Second Member. This Gardiner
turn'd his coat in Henry's time;
The serpent that hath slough'd will
slough again.

Third Member. Tut, then we all
are serpents.

Second Member. Speak for your-
self.

Third Member. Ay, and for Gardi-
ner! being English citizen,
How should he bear a bridegroom
out of Spain?

The Queen would have him! being
English churchman

How should he bear the headship of
the Pope?

The Queen would have it! States-
men that are wise

Shape a necessity, as a sculptor clay,
To their own model.

Second Member. Statesmen that
are wise

Take truth herself for model. What
say you?

[To Sir Ralph Bagenhall.]

Bagenhall. We talk and talk.

First Member. Ay, and what use
to talk?

Philip's no sudden alien—the Queen's
husband,

He's here, and king, or will be—yet
cocksbody!

So hated here! I watch'd a hive of late;
My seven-years' friend was with me,

my young boy;
Out crept a wasp, with half the swarm
behind.

'Philip!' says he. I had to cuff the
rogue
For infant treason.

Third Member. But they say that
bees,

If any creeping life invade their hive
Too gross to be thrust out, will build
him round,

And bind him in from harming of
their combs.

And Philip by these articles is bound
From stirring hand or foot to wrong
the realm.

Second Member. By bonds of bees-
wax, like your creeping thing;
But your wise bees had stung him
first to death.

Third Member. Hush, hush!
You wrong the Chancellor: the
clauses added

To that same treaty which the em-
peror sent us

Were mainly Gardiner's: that no
foreigner

Hold office in the household, fleet,
forts, army;

That if the Queen should die without
a child,

The bond between the kingdoms be
dissolved;

That Philip should not mix us any way
With his French wars—

Second Member. Ay, ay, but
what security,

Good sir, for this, if Philip—

Third Member. Peace—the Queen,
Philip, and Pole. [*All rise, and stand.*]

Enter MARY, PHILIP, and POLE.

[*Gardiner conducts them to the
three choirs of state. Philip sits
on the Queen's left, Pole on her
right.*]

Gardiner. Our short-lived sun, be-
fore his winter plunge,
Laughs at the last red leaf, and
Andrew's Day.

Mary. Should not this day be
held in after years
More solemn than of old?

Philip. Madam, my wish
Echoes your Majesty's.

Pole. It shall be so.

Gardiner. Mine echoes both your
Grace's; (*aside*) but the
Pope—

Can we not have the Catholic church
as well

Without as with the Italian? if we
cannot,

Why then the Pope.

My lords of the upper house,
And ye, my masters, of the lower
house,

Do ye stand fast by that which ye re-
solved?

Voices. We do.

Gardiner. And be you all one
mind to supplicate

The Legate here for pardon, and ac-
knowledge

The primacy of the Pope?

Voices. We are all one mind.

Gardiner. Then must I play the
vassal to this Pole. [*Aside.*]

[*He draws a paper from under his
robes and presents it to the King
and Queen, who look through it
and return it to him; then as-
cends a tribune, and reads.*]

We, the Lords Spiritual and Tem-
poral,

And Commons here in Parliament as-
sembled,

Presenting the whole body of this
realm

Of England, and dominions of the
same,

Do make most humble suit unto your
Majesties,

In our own name and that of all the
state,

That by your gracious means and in-
tercession

Our supplication be exhibited

To the Lord Cardinal Pole, sent here
as Legate

From our most Holy Father Julius,
Pope,

And from the Apostolic see of Rome;
And do declare our penitence and

grief

For our long schism and disobedi-
ence.

Either in making laws and ordinances

Against the Holy Father's primacy,
Or else by doing or by speaking
aught
Which might impugn or prejudice the
same;

By this our supplication promising,
As well for our own selves as all the
realm,
That now we be and ever shall be
quick,
Under and with your Majesties' au-
thorities,

To do to the utmost all that in us lies
Towards the abrogation and repeal
Of all such laws and ordinances
made;

Whereon we humbly pray your Maj-
esties,

As persons undefiled with our offence,
So to set forth this humble suit of
ours

That we the rather by your interces-
sion

May from the Apostolic see obtain,
Thro' this most reverend Father, ab-
solution,

And full release from danger of all
censures

Of Holy Church that we be fall'n into,
So that we may, as children penitent,
Be once again received into the
bosom

And unity of Universal Church;
And that this noble realm thro' after
years

May in this unity and obedience
Unto the holy see and reigning Pope
Serve God and both your Majesties.

Voices. Amen. *[All sit.]*

*[He again presents the petition to
the King and Queen, who hand
it reverentially to Pole.]*

Pole (sitting). This is the loveliest
day that ever smiled

On England. All her breath should,
incenselike.

Rise to the heavens in grateful praise
of Him

Who now recalls her to His ancient
fold.

Lo! once again God to this realm
hath given

A token of His more especial Grace;

For as this people were the first of all
The islands call'd into the dawning
church

Out of the dead, deep night of hea-
thendom,

So now are these the first whom God
hath given

Grace to repent and sorrow for their
schism;

And if your penitence be not mockery,
Oh how the blessed angels who re-
joice

Over one saved do triumph at this
hour

In the reborn salvation of a land
So noble. *[A pause.]*

For ourselves we do protest
That our commission is to heal, not
harm;

We come not to condemn, but recon-
cile;

We come not to compel, but call
again;

We come not to destroy, but edify;
Nor yet to question things already
done;

These are forgiven—matters of the
past—

And range with jetsam and with offal
thrown

Into the blind sea of forgetfulness.

[A pause.]
Ye have reversed the attainer laid
on us

By him who sack'd the house of
God; and we,

Amplier than any field on our poor
earth

Can render thanks in fruit for being
sown,

Do here and now repay you sixty-fold,
A hundred, yea, a thousand thousand-

fold,
With heaven for earth.

*[Rising and stretching forth his
hands. All kneel but Sir Ralph
Bagenhall, who rises and re-
mains standing.]*

The Lord who hath redeem'd us
With His own blood, and wash'd us
from our sins,

To purchase for Himself a stainless
bride;

He, whom the Father hath appointed
Head
Of all his church, He by His mercy
absolve you! [A pause.

And we by that authority Apostolic
Given unto us, his Legate, by the
Pope,

Our Lord and Holy Father, Julius,
God's Vicar and Vicegerent upon
earth,

Do here absolve you and deliver you
And every one of you, and all the
realm

And its dominions from all heresy,
All schism, and from all and every
censure,

Judgment, and pain accruing there-
upon;

And also we restore you to the bosom
And unity of Universal Church.

[Turning to Gardiner.
Our letters of commission will declare
this plainleir.

[Queen heard sobbing. Cries of
Amen! Amen! Some of the
Members embrace one another.
All but Sir Ralph Bagenhall
pass out into the neighboring
chapel whence is heard the Te
Deum.

Bagenhall. We strove against the
papacy from the first,

In William's time, in our first Ed-
ward's time,

And in my master Henry's time; but
now,

The unity of Universal Church,
Mary would have it; and this Gardi-
ner follows;

The unity of Universal Hell,
Philip would have it; and this Gardi-
ner follows!

A Parliament of imitative apes!
Sheep at the gap which Gardiner
takes, who not

Believes the Pope, nor any of them
believe—

These spaniel-Spaniard English of the
time,
Who rub their fawning noses in the
dust,

For that is Philip's gold-dust, and
adore

This Vicar of their Vicar. Would I
had been
Born Spaniard! I had held my head
up then.
I am ashamed that I am Bagenhall,
English.

Enter OFFICER.

Officer. Sir Ralph Bagenhall!

Bagenhall. What of that?

Officer. You were the one sole man
in either house
Who stood upright when both the
houses fell.

Bagenhall. The houses fell!

Officer. I mean the houses knelt
Before the Legate.

Bagenhall. Do not scrimp
your phrase,
But stretch it wider; say when Eng-
land fell.

Officer. I say you were the one
sole man who stood.

Bagenhall. I am the one sole man
in either house,
Perchance in England, loves her like
a son.

Officer. Well, you one man, be-
cause you stood upright,
Her Grace the Queen commands you
to the Tower.

Bagenhall. As traitor, or as here-
tic, or for what?

Officer. If any man in any way
would be
The one man, he shall be so to his cost.
Bagenhall. What! will she have
my head?

Officer. A round fine likelier.
Your pardon. [Calling to Attendant.
By the river to the Tower.

[Exit.

SCENE IV. — WHITEHALL. A
ROOM IN THE PALACE.

MARY, GARDINER, POLE, PAGET,
BONNER, etc.

Mary. The King and I, my Lords,
now that all traitors

Against our royal state have lost the heads
 Wherewith they plotted in their treasonous malice,
 Have talk'd together, and are well agreed
 That those old statutes touching Lollardism
 To bring the heretic to the stake, should be
 No longer a dead letter, but requick-
 en'd.

One of the Council. Why, what hath fluster'd Gardiner? how he rubs His forelock!

Paget. I have changed a word with him

In coming, and may change a word again.

Gardiner. Madam, your Highness is our sun, the King

And you together our two suns in one;
 And so the beams of both may shine upon us,

The faith that seem'd to droop will feel your light,

Lift head, and flourish; yet not light alone,

There must be heat—there must be heat enough

To scorch and wither heresy to the root.

For what saith Christ? 'Compel them to come in.'

And what saith Paul? 'I would they were cut off

That trouble you.' Let the dead letter live!

Trace it in fire, that all the louts to whom

Their A B C is darkness, clowns and grooms

May read it! so you quash rebellion too,

For heretic and traitor are all one:
 Two vipers of one breed—an amphibaena,

Each end a sting: Let the dead letter burn!

Paget. Yet there be some disloyal Catholics,

And many heretics loyal; heretic throats

Cried no God-bless-her to the Lady Jane,

But shouted in Queen Mary. So there be

Some traitor-heretic, there is axe and cord.

To take the lives of others that are loyal,
 And by the churchman's pitiless doom

of fire,
 Were but a thankless policy in the crown,

Ay, and against itself; for there are many.

Mary. If we could burn out heresy, my Lord Paget,

We reck not tho' we lost this crown of England—

Ay! tho' it were ten Englands!

Gardiner. Right, your Grace. Paget, you are all for this poor life of ours,

And care but little for the life to be.

Paget. I have some time, for curiousness, my Lord,

Watch'd children playing at *their* life to be,

And cruel at it, killing helpless flies;
 Such is our time—all times for aught

I know.

Gardiner. We kill the heretics that sting the soul—

They, with right reason, flies that prick the flesh.

Paget. They had not reach'd right reason; little children!

They kill'd but for their pleasure and the power

They felt in killing.

Gardiner. A spice of Satan, ha! Why, good! what then? granted!—

we are fallen creatures;

Look to your Bible, Paget! we are fallen.

Paget. I am but of the laity, my Lord Bishop,

And may not read your Bible, yet I found

One day, a wholesome scripture,
 'Little children,

Love one another.'

Gardiner. Did you find a scripture,

'I come not to bring peace but a sword'? The sword

Is in her Grace's hand to smite with.

Paget.
You stand up here to fight for heresy,
You are more than guess'd at as a
heretic,
And on the steep-up track of the true
faith

Your lapses are far seen.

Paget. The faultless Gardiner!

Mary. You brawl beyond the ques-
tion; speak, Lord Legate!

Pole. Indeed, I cannot follow with
your Grace:

Rather would say—the shepherd doth
not kill

The sheep that wander from his flock,
but sends

His careful dog to bring them to the
fold.

Look to the Netherlands, wherein
have been

Such holocausts of heresy! to what
end?

For yet the faith is not established
there.

Gardiner. The end's not come.

Pole. No—nor this way
will come,

Seeing there lie two ways to every end,
A better and a worse—the worse is
here

To persecute, because to persecute
Makes a faith hated, and is further-
more

No perfect witness of a perfect faith
In him who persecutes: when men
are tost

On tides of strange opinion, and not
sure

Of their own selves, they are wroth
with their own selves,

And thence with others; then, who
lights the faggot?

Not the full faith, no, but the lurking
doubt.

Old Rome, that first made martyrs in
the Church,

Trembled for her own gods, for these
were trembling—

But when did our Rome tremble?

Paget. Did she not

In Henry's time and Edward's?

Pole. What, my Lord!

The Church on Peter's rock? never!

I have seen

A pine in Italy that cast its shadow
Athwart a cataract; firm stood the
pine—

The cataract shook the shadow. To
my mind,

The cataract typed the headlong
plunge and fall

Of heresy to the pit: the pine was
Rome.

You see, my Lords,

It was the shadow of the Church that
trembled;

Your church was but the shadow of a
church,

Wanting the Papal mitre.

Gardiner (muttering). Here be
tropes.

Pole. And tropes are good to clothe
a naked truth,

And make it look more seemly.

Gardiner. Tropes again!

Pole. You are hard to please.

Then without tropes, my Lord,
An overmuch severeness, I repeat,
When faith is wavering makes the
waverer pass

Into more settled hatred of the doc-
trines

Of those who rule, which hatred by
and by

Involves the ruler (thus there springs
to light

That Centaur of a monstrous Com-
mon-weal,

The traitor-heretic) then tho' some
may quail,

Yet others are that dare the stake and
fire,

And their strong torment bravely
borne, begets

An admiration and an indignation,
And hot desire to imitate; so the
plague

Of schism spreads; were there but
three or four

Of these misleaders, yet I would not
say

Burn! and we cannot burn whole
towns; they are many,

As my Lord Paget says.

Gardiner. Yet my Lord Cardinal—

Pole. I am your Legate; please
you let me finish.

Methinks that under our Queen's
regimen

We might go softlier than with crim-
son rowel

And streaming lash. When Herod-
Henry first

Began to batter at your English
Church,

This was the cause, and hence the
judgment on her.

She seethed with such adulteries, and
the lives

Of many among your churchmen
were so foul

That heaven wept and earth blush'd.
I would advise

That we should thoroughly cleanse
the Church within

Before these bitter statutes be re-
quicken'd.

So after that when she once more is
seen

White as the light, the spotless bride
of Christ,

Like Christ himself on Tabor, possi-
bly

The Lutheran may be won to her
again;

Till when, my Lords, I counsel toler-
ance.

Gardiner. What, if a mad dog bit
your hand, my Lord,

Would you not chop the bitten finger
off,

Lest your whole body should madden
with the poison?

I would not, were I Queen, tolerate
the heretic,

No, not an hour. The ruler of a land
Is bounden by his power and place to
see

His people be not poison'd. Tolerate
them!

Why? do they tolerate you? Nay,
many of them

Would burn—have burnt each other;
call they not

The one true faith, a loathsome idol-
worship?

Beware, Lord Legate, of a heavier
crime

Than heresy is itself; beware, I say,
Lest men accuse you of indifference
To all faiths, all religion; for you
know

Right well that you yourself have
been supposed

Tainted with Lutheranism in Italy.

Pole (angered). But you, my Lord,
beyond all supposition,

In clear and open day were congruent
With that vile Cranmer in the ac-
cursed lie

Of good Queen Catharine's divorce—
the spring

Of all those evils that have flow'd
upon us;

For you yourself have truckled to the
tyrant,

And done your best to bastardize our
Queen,

For which God's righteous judgment
fell upon you

In your five years of imprisonment,
my Lord,

Under young Edward. Who so bol-
ster'd up

The gross King's headship of the
Church, or more

Denied the Holy Father!

Gardiner. Ha! what! eh?

But you, my Lord, a polish'd gentle-
man,

A bookman, flying from the heat and
tussle,

You lived among your vines and
oranges,

In your soft Italy yonder! You were
sent for,

You were appeal'd to, but you still
prefer'd

Your learned leisure. As for what I
did

I suffer'd and repented. You, Lord
Legate

And Cardinal-Deacon, have not now
to learn

That ev'n St. Peter in his time of fear
Denied his Master, ay, and thrice, my
Lord.

Pole. But not for five-and-twenty
years, my Lord.

Gardiner. Ha! good! it seems
then I was summon'd hither

But to be mock'd and baited. Speak,
friend Bonner,
And tell this learned Legate he lacks
zeal.

The Church's evil is not as the King's,
Cannot be heal'd by stroking. The
mad bite

Must have the cautery—tell him—and
at once.

What would'st thou do hadst thou his
power, thou

That layest so long in heretic bonds
with me;

Would'st thou not burn and blast
them root and branch?

Bonner. Ay, after you, my Lord.

Gardiner. Nay, God's passion, be-
fore me! speak!

Bonner. I am on fire until I see
them flame.

Gardiner. Ay, the psalm-singing
weavers, cobblers, scum—

But this most noble prince Plantage-
net,

Our good Queen's cousin—dallying
over seas

Even when his brother's, nay, his
noble mother's,

Head fell—

Pole. Peace, madman!

Thou stirrest up a grief thou canst
not fathom.

Thou Christian Bishop, thou Lord
Chancellor

Of England! no more rein upon thine
anger

Than any child! Thou mak'st me
much ashamed

That I was for a moment wroth at
thee.

Mary. I come for counsel and ye
give me feuds,

Like dogs that set to watch their mas-
ter's gate,

Fall, when the thief is ev'n within the
walls,

To worrying one another. My Lord
Chancellor,

You have an old trick of offending us;
And but that you are art and part

with us

In purging heresy, well we might, for
this

Your violence and much roughness to
the Legate,

Have shut you from our counsels.
Cousin Pole,

You are fresh from brighter lands.
Retire with me.

His Highness and myself (so you al-
low us)

Will let you learn in peace and pri-
vacy

What power this cooler sun of Eng-
land hath

In breeding godless vermin. And
pray Heaven

That you may see according to our
sight.

Come, cousin.

[*Exeunt Queen and Pole, etc.*]

Gardiner. Pole has the Plantage-
net face,

But not the force made them our
mightiest kings.

Fine eyes—but melancholy, irreso-
lute—

A fine beard, Bonner, a very full fine
beard.

But a weak mouth, an indeterminate
—ha?

Bonner. Well, a weak mouth, per-
chance.

Gardiner. And not like thine
To gorge a heretic whole, roasted or
raw.

Bonner. I'd do my best, my Lord;
but yet the Legate

Is here as Pope and Master of the
Church,

And if he go not with you—

Gardiner. Tut, Master Bishop,
Our bashful Legate, saw'st not how

he flush'd?

Touch him upon his old heretical
talk,

He'll burn a diocese to prove his or-
thodoxy.

And let him call me truckler. In
those times,

Thou knowest we had to dodge, or
duck, or die;

I kept my head for use of Holy
Church;

And see you, we shall have to dodge
again,

And let the Pope trample our rights,
and plunge
His foreign fist into our island Church
To plump the leaner pouch of Italy.
For a time, for a time.

Why? that these statutes may be put
in force,
And that his fan may thoroughly
purge his floor.

Bonner. So then you hold the
Pope—

Gardiner. I hold the Pope!
What do I hold him? what do I hold
the Pope?

Come, come, the morsel stuck—this
Cardinal's fault—

I have gulpt it down. I am wholly
for the Pope,

Utterly and altogether for the Pope,
The Eternal Peter of the changeless
chair,

Crown'd slave of slaves, and mitred
king of kings,

God upon earth! what more? what
would you have?

Hence, let's be gone.

Enter USHER.

Usher. Well that you be not gone,
My Lord. The Queen, most wroth
at first with you,

Is now content to grant you full for-
giveness,

So that you crave full pardon of the
Legate.

I am sent to fetch you.

Gardiner. Doth Pole yield, sir, ha!
Did you hear 'em? were you by?

Usher. I cannot tell you,
His bearing is so courtly-delicate;

And yet methinks he falters: their two
Graces

Do so dear-cousin and royal-cousin
him,

So press on him the duty which as
Legate

He owes himself, and with such royal
smiles—

Gardiner. Smiles that burn men.

Bonner. It will be carried.

He falters, ha? 'fore God, we change
and change;

Men now are bow'd and old, the doc-
tors tell you,
At three-score years; then if we
change at all

We needs must do it quickly; it is an
age

Of brief life, and brief purpose, and
brief patience,

As I have shown to-day. I am sorry
for it

If Pole be like to turn. Our old
friend Cranmer,

Your more especial love, hath turn'd
so often,

He knows not where he stands, which,
if this pass,

We two shall have to teach him; let
'em look to it,

Cranmer and Hooper, Ridley and
Latimer,

Rogers and Ferrar, for their time is
come,

Their hour is hard at hand, their 'dies
lrae,'

Their 'dies Illa,' which will test their
sect.

I feel it but a duty—you will find in it
Pleasure as well as duty, worthy Bon-
ner,—

To test their sect. Sir, I attend the
Queen

To crave most humble pardon—of her
most

Royal, Infallible, Papal Legate-cousin.
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V.—WOODSTOCK.

ELIZABETH, LADY IN WAITING.

Elizabeth. So they have sent poor
Courtenay over sea.

Lady. And banish'd us to Wood-
stock, and the fields.

The colors of our Queen are green
and white,

These fields are only green, they
make me gape.

Elizabeth. There's whitethorn, girl.

Lady. Ay, for an hour in May.
But court is always May, buds out in
masques,

Breaks into feather'd merriments, and
flowers

In silken pageants. Why do they
keep us here?

Why still suspect your Grace?

Elizabeth. Hard upon both.
[Writes on the window with a dia-
mond.

Much suspected, of me
Nothing proven can be.
Quoth Elizabeth, prisoner.

Lady. What hath your Highness
written?

Elizabeth. A true rhyme.

Lady. Cut with a diamond; so to
last like truth.

Elizabeth. Ay, if truth last.

Lady. But truth, they say, will out,
So it must last. It is not like a word,
That comes and goes in uttering.

Elizabeth. Truth, a word!
The very Truth and very Word are
one.

But truth of story, which I glanced at
girl,

Is like a word that comes from olden
days,
And passes thro' the peoples: every
tongue

Alters it passing, till it spells and
speaks

Quite other than at first.

Lady. I do not follow.

Elizabeth. How many names in the
long sweep of time
That so foreshortens greatness, may
but hang

On the chance mention of some fool
that once

Brake bread with us, perhaps: and my
poor chronicle

Is but of glass. Sir Henry Beding-
field

May split it for a spite.

Lady. God grant it last,
And witness to your Grace's inno-
cence,

Till doomsday melt it.

Elizabeth. Or a second fire,
Like that which lately crackled under-
foot

And in this very chamber, fusethe glass,
And char us back again into the dust
We spring from. Never peacock
against rain

Scream'd as you did for water.

Lady. And I got it.
I woke Sir Henry—and he's true to
you—

I read his honest horror in his eyes.

Elizabeth. Or true to you?

Lady. Sir Henry Bedingfield!
I will have no man true to me, your
Grace,

But one that pares his nails; to me?
the clown!

Elizabeth. Out, girl! you wrong a
noble gentleman.

Lady. For, like his cloak, his man-
ners want the nap
And gloss of court; but of this fire he
says,

Nay swears, it was no wicked wilful-
ness,

Only a natural chance.

Elizabeth. A chance—perchance
One of those wicked wilfuls that men
make,

Nor shame to call it nature. Nay, I
know

They hunt my blood. Save for my
daily range

Among the pleasant fields of Holy
Writ

I might despair. But there hath some
one come;

The house is all in movement. Hence,
and see. [Exit Lady.

Milkmaid (singing without).

Shame upon you, Robin,

Shame upon you now!

Kiss me would you? with my hands

Milking the cow?

Daisies grow again,

Kingcups blow again,

And you came and kiss'd me milking the
cow.

Robin came behind me,

Kiss'd me well I vow;

Cuff him could I? with my hands

Milking the cow?

Swallows fly again,

Cuckoos cry again,
And you came and kiss'd me milking the
cow.

Come, Robin, Robin,
Come and kiss me now;
Help it can I? with my hands
Milking the cow?
Ringdoves coo again,
All things woo again.
Come behind and kiss me milking the
cow!

Elizabeth. Right honest and red-
cheek'd; Robin was violent,
And she was crafty—a sweet violence,
And a sweet craft. I would I were a
milkmaid,
To sing, love, marry, churn, brew,
bake, and die,
Then have my simple headstone by
the church,
And all things lived and ended hon-
estly.
I could not if I would. I am Harry's
daughter:
Gardiner would have my head. They
are not sweet,
The violence and the craft that do
divide
The world of nature; what is weak
must lie;
The lion needs but roar to guard his
young;
The lapwing lies, says 'here' when
they are there.
Threaten the child; 'I'll scourge you
if you did it.'
What weapon hath the child, save his
soft tongue,
To say 'I did not?' and my rod's the
block.
I never lay my head upon the pillow
But that I think, 'Wilt thou lie there
to-morrow?'
How oft the falling axe, that never fell,
Hath shock'd me back into the day-
light truth
That it may fall to-day! Those damp,
black, dead
Nights in the Tower; dead—with the
fear of death
Too dead ev'n for a death-watch! Toll
of a bell,

Stroke of a clock, the scurrying of a
rat
Affrighted me, and then delighted
me,
For there was life—And there was life
in death—
The little murder'd princes, in a pale
light,
Rose hand in hand, and whisper'd,
'come away!'
The civil wars are gone for evermore:
Thou last of all the Tudors, come
away!
With us is peace!' The last? It
was a dream;
I must not dream, not wink, but
watch. She has gone,
Maid Marian to her Robin—by and
by
Both happy! a fox may filch a hen by
night,
And make a morning outcry in the
yard;
But there's no Renard here to 'catch
her tripping.'
Catch me who can; yet, sometime I
have wish'd
That I were caught, and kill'd away
at once
Out of the flutter. The gray rogue,
Gardiner,
Went on his knees, and pray'd me
to confess
In Wyatt's business, and to cast my-
self
Upon the good Queen's mercy; ay,
when, my Lord?
God save the Queen! My jailor—

Enter SIR HENRY BEDINGFIELD.

Bedingfield. One, whose bolts,
That jail you from free life, bar you
from death.
There haunt some Papist ruffians here—
about
Would murder you.

Elizabeth. I thank you heartily, sir,
But I am royal, tho' your prisoner,
And God hath blest or cursed me with
a nose—

Your boots are from the horses.

Bedingfield. Ay, my Lady.

When next there comes a missive
from the Queen

It shall be all my study for one hour
To rose and lavender my horsiness,
Before I dare to glance upon your
Grace.

Elizabeth. A missive from the
Queen: last time she wrote,
I had like to have lost my life: it
takes my breath:

O God, sir, do you look upon your
boots,

Are you so small a man? Help me:
what think you,

Is it life or death?

Bedingfield. I thought not on my
boots;

The devil take all boots were ever
made

Since man went barefoot. See, I lay
it here,

For I will come no nearer to your
Grace;

[*Laying down the letter.*
And, whether it bring you bitter news
or sweet,

And God hath given your Grace a
nose, or not,

I'll help you, if I may.

Elizabeth. Your pardon, then;
It is the heat and narrowness of the
cage

That makes the captive testy; with
free wing

The world were all one Araby.

Leave me now,

Will you, companion to myself, sir?

Bedingfield. Will I?
With most exceeding willingness, I
will;

You know I never come till I be
call'd. [*Exit.*]

Elizabeth. It lies there folded: is
there venom in it?

A snake—and if I touch it, it may
sting.

Come, come, the worst!

Best wisdom is to know the worst at
once. [*Reads:*]

'It is the King's wish, that you
should wed Prince Philibert of Savoy.
You are to come to Court on the in-

stant; and think of this in your com-
ing.

'MARY THE QUEEN.'

Think! I have many thoughts;
I think there may be birdlime here
for me;

I think they fain would have me from
the realm;

I think the Queen may never bear a
child;

I think that I may be some time the
Queen,

Then, Queen indeed: no foreign
prince or priest

Should fill my throne, myself upon
the steps.

I think I will not marry anyone,
Specially not this landless Philibert
Of Savoy; but, if Philip menace me,

I think that I will play with Phil-
ibert,—

As once the Holy Father did with
mine,

Before my father married my good
mother,—

For fear of Spain.

Enter LADY.

Lady. O Lord! your Grace, your
Grace,

I feel so happy: it seems that we
shall fly

These bald, blank fields, and dance
into the sun

That shines on princes.

Elizabeth. Yet, a moment since,
I wish'd myself the milkmaid singing
here,

To kiss and cuff among the birds and
flowers—

A right rough life and healthful.

Lady. But the wench
Hath her own troubles; she is weep-

ing now;

For the wrong Robin took her at her
word.

Then the cow kick'd, and all her milk
was spilt.

Your Highness such a milkmaid?

Elizabeth. I had kept

My Robins and my cows in sweeter
order

Had I been such.

Lady (slyly). And had your Grace
a Robin?

Elizabeth. Come, come, you are
chill here; you want the sun
That shines at court; make ready for
the journey.

Pray God, we 'scape the sunstroke.
Ready at once. *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE VI.—LONDON. A ROOM
IN THE PALACE.

LORD PETRE and LORD WILLIAM
HOWARD.

Petre. You cannot see the Queen.
Renard denied her,
Ev'n now to me.

Howard. Their Flemish go-be-
tween
And all-in-all. I came to thank her
Majesty
For freeing my friend Bagenhall from
the Tower;
A grace to me! Mercy, that herb-of-
grace,
Flowers now but seldom.

Petre. Only now perhaps.
Because the Queen hath been three
days in tears
For Philip's going—like the wild
hedge-rose
Of a soft winter, possible, not probable,
However you have prov'n it.

Howard. I must see her.

Enter RENARD.

Renard. My Lords, you cannot see
her Majesty.

Howard. Why then the King! for
I would have him bring it
Home to the leisure wisdom of his
Queen,
Before he go, that since these statutes
past,
Gardiner out-Gardiners Gardiner in
his heat,
Bonner cannot out-Bonner his own
self—
Beast!—but they play with fire as
children do,

And burn the house. I know that
these are breeding
A fierce resolve and fixt heart-hate in
men

Against the King, the Queen, the
Holy Father,

The faith itself. Can I not see him?
Renard. Not now.

And in all this, my Lord, her Majesty
Is flint of flint, you may strike fire
from her,
Not hope to melt her. I will give
your message.

[Exeunt Petre and Howard.]

Enter PHILIP (musing).

Philip. She will not have Prince
Philibert of Savoy,

I talk'd with her in vain—says she
will live

And die true maid—a goodly creature
too.

Would *she* had been the Queen! yet
she must have him;

She troubles England: that she
breathes in England

Is life and lungs to every rebel birth
That passes out of embryo.

Simon Renard!—
This Howard, whom they fear, what
was he saying?

Renard. What your imperial
father said, my liege,

To deal with heresy gentlier. Gardi-
ner burns,

And Bonner burns; and it would
seem this people

Care more for our brief life in their
wet land,

Than yours in happier Spain. I told
my Lord

He should not vex her Highness; she
would say

These are the means God works with,
that His church

May flourish.

Philip. Ay, sir, but in statesman-
ship

To strike too soon is oft to miss the
blow.

Thou knowest I bad my chaplain,
Castro, preach



"THE GIRL AND BOY, SIR, KNOW THEIR DIFFERENCES!" *Page 130.*



Against these burnings.

Renard. And the Emperor
Approved you, and when last he
wrote, declared

His comfort in your Grace that you
were bland

And affable to men of all estates,
In hope to charm them from their
hate of Spain.

Philip. In hope to crush all
heresy under Spain.

But, Renard, I am sicker staying here
Than any sea could make me passing
hence,

Tho' I be ever deadly sick at sea.
So sick am I with biding for this child.
Is it the fashion in this clime for
women

To go twelve months in bearing of a
child?

The nurses yawn'd, the cradle gaped,
they led

Processions, chanted litanies, clash'd
their bells,

Shot off their lying cannon, and her
priests

Have preach'd, the fools, of this fair
prince to come;

Till, by St. James, I find myself the
fool.

Why do you lift your eyebrow at me
thus?

Renard. I never saw your High-
ness moved till now.

Philip. So weary am I of this wet
land of theirs,

And every soul of man that breathes
therein.

Renard. My liege, we must not
drop the mask before

The masquerade is over—

Philip. —Have I dropt it?
I have but shown a loathing face to
you,

Who knew it from the first.

Enter MARY.

Mary (aside). With Renard. Still
Parleying with Renard, all the day
with Renard,

And scarce a greeting all the day for
me—

And goes to-morrow. [*Exit Mary.*

*Philip (to Renard, who advances to
him).* Well, sir, is there more?

*Renard (who has perceived the
Queen).* May Simon Renard
speak a single word?

Philip. Ay.

Renard. And be forgiven for it?

Philip. Simon Renard
Knows me too well to speak a single
word

That could not be forgiven.

Renard. Well, my liege,
Your Grace hath a most chaste and
loving wife.

Philip. Why not? The Queen of
Philip should be chaste.

Renard. Ay, but, my Lord, you
know what Virgil sings,

Woman is various and most mutable.
Philip. She play the harlot!
never.

Renard. No, sire, no,
Not dream'd of by the rabidest gos-
peller.

There was a paper thrown into the
palace,

'The King hath wearied of his barren
bride.'

She came upon it, read it, and then
rent it,

With all the rage of one who hates a
truth

He cannot but allow. Sire, I would
have you—

What should I say, I cannot pick my
words—

Be somewhat less—majestic to your
Queen.

Philip. Am I to change my man-
ners, Simon Renard,

Because these islanders are brutal
beasts?

Or would you have me turn a sonnet-
eer,

And warble those brief-sighted eyes of
hers?

Renard. Brief-sighted tho' they be,
I have seen them, sire,

When you perchance were trifling
royally

With some fair dame of court, sud-
denly fill

With such fierce fire—had it been fire indeed

It would have burnt both speakers.

Philip. Ay, and then?

Renard. Sire, might it not be policy in some matter
Of small importance now and then to cede

A point to her demand?

Philip. Well, I am going.

Renard. For should her love when you are gone, my liege,
Witness these papers, there will not be wanting

Those that will urge her injury—should her love—

And I have known such women more than one—

Veer to the counterpoint, and jealous

Hath in it an alchemic force to fuse Almost into one metal love and hate,—

And she impress her wrongs upon her Council,

And these again upon her Parliament—

We are not loved here, and would be then perhaps

Not so well holpen in our wars with France,

As else we might be—here she comes.

Enter MARY.

Mary. O Philip! Nay, must you go indeed?

Philip. Madam, I must.

Mary. The parting of a husband and a wife

Is like the cleaving of a heart; one half

Will flutter here, one there.

Philip. You say true, Madam.

Mary. The Holy Virgin will not have me yet

Lose the sweet hope that I may bear a prince.

If such a prince were born and you not here!

Philip. I should be here if such a prince were born.

Mary. But must you go?

Philip. Madam, you know my father,

Retiring into cloistral solitude

To yield the remnant of his years to heaven,

Will shift the yoke and weight of all the world

From off his neck to mine. We meet at Brussels.

But since mine absence will not be for long,

Your Majesty shall go to Dover with me,

And wait my coming back.

Mary. To Dover? no, I am too feeble. I will go to Green-

wich, So you will have me with you; and there watch

All that is gracious in the breath of heaven

Draw with your sails from our poor land, and pass

And leave me, Philip, with my prayers for you.

Philip. And doubtless I shall profit by your prayers.

Mary. Methinks that would you tarry one day more

(The news was sudden) I could mould myself

To bear your going better; will you do it?

Philip. Madam, a day may sink or save a realm.

Mary. A day may save a heart from breaking too.

Philip. Well, Simon Renard, shall we stop a day?

Renard. Your Grace's business will not suffer, sire,

For one day more, so far as I can tell.

Philip. Then one day more to please her Majesty.

Mary. The sunshine sweeps across my life again.

O if I knew you felt this parting, Philip,

As I do.

Philip. By St. James I do protest, Upon the faith and honor of a Span-

iard,

I am vastly grieved to leave your Majesty.

Simon, is supper ready?

Renard. Ay, my liege, I saw the covers laying.

Philip. Let us have it. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—A ROOM IN THE PALACE.

MARY, CARDINAL POLE.

Mary. What have you there?

Pole. So please your Majesty, A long petition from the foreign exiles To spare the life of Cranmer.

Bishop Thirlby, And my Lord Paget and Lord William Howard, Crave, in the same cause, hearing of your Grace.

Hath he not written himself—infatuated—

To sue you for his life?

Mary. His life? Oh, no; Not sued for that—he knows it were in vain.

But so much of the anti-papal leaven Works in him yet, he hath pray'd me not to sully

Mine own prerogative, and degrade the realm

By seeking justice at a stranger's hand

Against my natural subject. King and Queen,

To whom he owes his loyalty after God,

Shall these accuse him to a foreign prince?

Death would not grieve him more. I cannot be

True to this realm of England and the Pope

Together, says the heretic.

Pole. And there errs; As he hath ever err'd thro' vanity.

A secular kingdom is but as the body

Lacking a soul; and in itself a beast.

The Holy Father in a Secular kingdom

Is as the soul descending out of heaven

Into a body generate.

Mary. Write to him, then.

Pole. I will.

Mary. And sharply, Pole.

Pole. Here come the Cranmerites!

Enter THIRLBY, LORD PAGET, LORD WILLIAM HOWARD

Howard. Health to your Grace! Good morrow, my Lord Cardinal;

We make our humble prayer unto your Grace

That Cranmer may withdraw to foreign parts,

Or into private life within the realm.

In several bills and declarations, Madam,

He hath recanted all his heresies.

Paget. Ay, ay; if Bonner have not forged the bills. [*Aside.*]

Mary. Did not More die, and Fisher? he must burn.

Howard. He hath recanted, Madam.

Mary. The better for him. He burns in Purgatory, not in Hell.

Howard. Ay, ay, your Grace; but it was never seen

That any one recanting thus at full, As Cranmer hath, came to the fire on earth.

Mary. It will be seen now, then.

Thirlby. O Madam, Madam! I thus implore you, low upon my knees,

To reach the hand of mercy to my friend.

I have err'd with him; with him I have recanted.

What human reason is there why my friend

Should meet with lesser mercy than myself?

Mary. My Lord of Ely, this. After a riot

We hang the leaders, let their following go.

Cranmer is head and father of these
heresies,
New learning as they call it; yea,
may God
Forget me at most need when I for-
get
Her foul divorce—my sainted mother
—No!—

Howard. Ay, ay, but mighty doc-
tors doubted there.
The Pope himself waver'd; and more
than one
Row'd in that galley—Gardiner to
wit,

Whom truly I deny not to have been
Your faithful friend and trusty coun-
cillor.

Hath not your Highness ever read
his book,

His tractate upon True Obedience,
Writ by himself and Bonner?

Mary. I will take
Such order with all bad, heretical
books

That none shall hold them in his
house and live,
Henceforward. No, my Lord.

Howard. Then never read it.
The truth is here. Your father was a
man

Of such colossal kinghood, yet so
courteous,

Except when wroth, you scarce could
meet his eye

And hold your own; and were he
wroth indeed,

You held it less, or not at all. I say,
Your father had a will that beat men
down;

Your father had a brain that beat men
down—

Pole. Not me, my Lord.

Howard. No, for you were not
here;

You sit upon this fallen Cranmer's
throne;

And it would more become you, my
Lord Legate,

To join a voice, so potent with her
Highness,

To ours in plea for Cranmer than to
stand

On naked self-assertion.

Mary. All your voices
Are waves on flint. The heretic must
burn.

Howard. Yet once he saved your
Majesty's own life;
Stood out against the King in your
behalf,
At his own peril.

Mary. I know not if he did;
And if he did I care not, my Lord

Howard.
My life is not so happy, no such boon,
That I should spare to take a heretic
priest's,

Who saved it or not saved. Why do
you vex me?

Paget. Yet to save Cranmer were
to serve the Church,
Your Majesty's I mean; he is effaced,
Self-blotted out; so wounded in his
honor,

He can but creep down into some
dark hole

Like a hurt beast, and hide himself
and die;

But if you burn him,—well, your High-
ness knows

The saying, 'Martyr's blood—seed of
the Church.'

Mary. Of the true Church; but
his is none, nor will be.

You are too politic for me, my Lord
Paget.

And if he have to live so loath'd a life,
It were more merciful to burn him
now.

Thirby. O yet relent. O, Madam,
if you knew him

As I do, ever gentle, and so gracious,
With all his learning—

Mary. Yet a heretic still.
His learning makes his burning the
more just.

Thirby. So worship't of all those
that came across him;

The stranger at his hearth, and all his
house—

Mary. His children and his concu-
bine, belike.

Thirby. To do him any wrong
was to beget

A kindness from him, for his heart
was rich,

Of such fine mould, that if you sow'd
therein
The seed of Hate, it blossom'd Char-
ity.

Pole. 'After his kind it costs him
nothing,' there's
An old world English adage to the
point.
These are but natural graces, my good
Bishop,
Which in the Catholic garden are as
flowers,
But on the heretic dunghill only
weeds.

Howard. Such weeds make dung-
hills gracious.

Mary. Enough, my Lords.
It is God's will, the Holy Father's will,
And Philip's will, and mine, that he
should burn.

He is pronounced anathema.

Howard. Farewell, Madam,
God grant you ampler mercy at your
call

Than you have shown to Cranmer.

[*Exeunt* Lords.]

Pole. After this,
Your Grace will hardly care to over-
look

This same petition of the foreign ex-
iles

For Cranmer's life.

Mary. Make out the writ to-night.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—OXFORD. CRANMER
IN PRISON.

Cranmer. Last night, I dream'd
the faggots were alight,
And that myself was fasten'd to the
stake,

And found it all a visionary flame,
Cool as the light in old decaying
wood;

And then King Harry look'd from
out a cloud,
And bad me have good courage; and
I heard

An angel cry 'There is more joy in
Heaven,'—

And after that, the trumpet of the
dead.

[*Trumpets without.*]

Why, there are trumpets blowing
now: what is it?

Enter FATHER COLE.

Cole. Cranmer, I come to question
you again;
Have you remain'd in the true Catho-
lic faith

I left you in?

Cranmer. In the true Catholic faith,
By Heaven's grace, I am more and
more confirm'd.

Why are the trumpets blowing,
Father Cole?

Cole. Cranmer, it is decided by the
Council

That you to-day should read your re-
cantation

Before the people in St. Mary's
Church.

And there be many heretics in the
town,

Who loathe you for your late return
to Rome,

And might assail you passing through
the street.

And tear you piecemeal: so you have
a guard.

Cranmer. Or seek to rescue me.
I thank the Council.

Cole. Do you lack any money?

Cranmer. Nay, why should I?

The prison fare is good enough for
me.

Cole. Ay, but to give the poor.

Cranmer. Hand it me, then!

I thank you.

Cole. For a little space, farewell;
Until I see you in St. Mary's Church.

[*Exit* Cole.]

Cranmer. It is against all prece-
dent to burn

One who recants; they mean to par-
don me.

To give the poor—they give the poor
who die.

Well, burn me or not burn me I am
fixt;

It is but a communion, not a mass:

A holy supper, not a sacrifice;

No man can make his Maker—Villa
Garcia.

Enter VILLA GARCIA.

Villa Garcia. Pray you write out this paper for me, Cranmer.

Cranmer. Have I not writ enough to satisfy you?

Villa Garcia. It is the last.

Cranmer. Give it me, then.

[*He writes.*

Now sign.

Cranmer. I have sign'd enough, and I will sign no more.

Villa Garcia. It is no more than what you have sign'd already, The public form thereof.

Cranmer. It may be so; I sign it with my presence, if I read it.

Villa Garcia. But this is idle of you. Well, sir, well, You are to beg the people to pray for you;

Exhort them to a pure and virtuous life;

Declare the Queen's right to the throne; confess

Your faith before all hearers; and retract

That Eucharistic doctrine in your book.

Will you not sign it now?

Cranmer. No, Villa Garcia, I sign no more. Will they have mercy on me?

Villa Garcia. Have you good hopes of mercy! So, farewell.

[*Exit.*

Cranmer. Good hopes, not theirs, have I that I am fixt, Fixt beyond fall; however, in strange hours,

After the long brain-dazing colloquies, And thousand-times recurring argument

Of those two friars ever in my prison, When left alone in my despondency, Without a friend, a book, my faith would seem

Dead or half-drown'd, or else swam heavily

Against the huge corruptions of the Church,

Monsters of mistradition, old enough To scare me into dreaming, 'what am I,

Cranmer, against whole ages?' was it so,

Or am I slandering my most inward friend,

To veil the fault of my most outward foe—

The soft and tremulous coward in the flesh?

O higher, holier, earlier, purer church, I have found thee and not leave thee any more.

It is but a communion, not a mass—

No sacrifice, but a life-giving feast!

[*Writes.*] So, so; this will I say— thus will I pray. [*Puts up the paper.*

Enter BONNER.

Bonner. Good day, old friend; what, you look somewhat worn;

And yet it is a day to test your health

Ev'n at the best: I scarce have spoken with you

Since when?—your degradation. At your trial

Never stood up a bolder man than you;

You would not cap the Pope's commissioner—

Your learning, and your stoutness, and your heresy,

Dumbfounded half of us. So, after that,

We had to dis-archbishop and unlord, And make you simple Cranmer once again.

The common barber clipt your hair, and I

Scraped from your finger-points the holy oil;

And worse than all, you had to kneel to me;

Which was not pleasant for you, Master Cranmer.

Now you, that would not recognize the Pope,

And you, that would not own the Real Presence,

Have found a real presence in the stake,

Which frights you back into the ancient faith;
And so you have recanted to the Pope.

How are the mighty fallen, Master Cranmer!

Cranmer. You have been more fierce against the Pope than I; But why fling back the stone he strikes me with? [*Aside.*

O Bonner, if I ever did you kindness—

Power hath been given you to try faith by fire—

Pray you, remembering how yourself have changed,

Be somewhat pitiful, after I have gone,

To the poor flock—to women and to children—

That when I was archbishop held with me.

Bonner. Ay—gentle as they call you—live or die!

Pitiful to this pitiful heresy?

I must obey the Queen and Council, man.

Win thro' this day with honor to yourself,

And I'll say something for you—so—good-bye. [*Exit.*

Cranmer. This hard coarse man of old hath crouch'd to me

Till I myself was half ashamed for him.

Enter THIRLBY.

Weep not, good Thirlby.

Thirlby. Oh, my Lord, my Lord! My heart is no such block as Bonner's is:

Who would not weep?

Cranmer. Why do you so my-lord me,

Who am disgraced?

Thirlby. On earth; but saved in heaven

By your recanting.

Cranmer. Will they burn me, Thirlby?

Thirlby. Alas, they will; these burnings will not help

The purpose of the faith; but my poor voice Against them is a whisper to the roar Of a spring-tide.

Cranmer. And they will surely burn me?

Thirlby. Ay; and besides, will have you in the church

Repeat your recantation in the ears

Of all men, to the saving of their souls, Before your execution. May God help you

Thro' that hard hour!

Cranmer. And may God bless you, Thirlby!

Well, they shall hear my recantation there. [*Exit Thirlby.*

Disgraced, dishonor'd!—not by them, indeed,

By mine own self—by mine own hand!

O thin-skinn'd hand and jutting veins, 'twas you

That sign'd the burning of poor Joan of Kent;

But then she was a witch. You have written much,

But you were never raised to plead for Frith,

Whose dogmas I have reach'd: he was deliver'd

To the secular arm to burn; and there was Lambert;

Who can foresee himself? truly these burnings,

As Thirlby says, are profitless to the burners,

And help the other side. You shall burn too,

Burn first when I am burnt.

Fire—inch by inch to die in agony! Latimer

Had a brief end—not Ridley. Hooper burn'd

Three-quarters of an hour. Will my faggots

Be wet as his were? It is a day of rain.

I will not muse upon it.

My fancy takes the burner's part, and makes

The fire seem even crueller than it is.

No, I not doubt that God will give me strength,
Albeit I have denied him.

Enter SOTO and VILLA GARCIA.

Villa Garcia. We are ready
To take you to St. Mary's, Master
Cranmer.

Cranmer. And I: lead on; ye
loose me from my bonds.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE III. — ST. MARY'S CHURCH.

COLE *in the Pulpit*, LORD WILLIAMS
OF THAME *presiding*. LORD WILLIAM
HOWARD, LORD PAGET, and
others. CRANMER *enters between*
SOTO and VILLA GARCIA, and the
whole Choir *strike up* 'Nunc Dimittis.'
CRANMER *is set upon a Scaffold*
before the people.

Cole. Behold him—

[A pause: people in the foreground.]

People. Oh, unhappy sight!

First Protestant. See how the tears
run down his fatherly face.

Second Protestant. James, didst
thou ever see a carrion crow
Stand watching a sick beast before he
dies?

First Protestant. Him perch'd up
there? I wish some thunder-
bolt

Would make this Cole a cinder, pulpit
and all.

Cole. Behold him, brethren: he
hath cause to weep!—

So have we all: weep with him if ye
will,

Yet—

It is expedient for one man to die,
Yea, for the people, lest the people
die.

Yet wherefore should he die that hath
return'd

To the one Catholic Universal Church,
Repentant of his errors?

Protestant murmurs. Ay, tell us
that.

Cole. Those of the wrong side will
despise the man,
Deeming him one that thro' the fear
of death
Gave up his cause, except he seal his
faith
In sight of all with flaming martyr-
dom.

Cranmer. Ay.

Cole. Ye hear him, and albeit there
may seem

According to the canons pardon due
To him that so repents, yet are there
causes

Wherefore our Queen and Council at
this time

Adjudge him to the death. He hath
been a traitor,

A shaker and confounder of the realm;
And when the King's divorce was sued
at Rome,

He here, this heretic metropolitan,
As if he had been the Holy Father,
sat

And judg'd it. Did I call him here-
tic?

A huge heresiarch! never was it
known

That any man so writing, preaching
so,

So poisoning the Church, so long con-
tinuing,

Hath found his pardon; therefore he
must die,

For warning and example.

[Other reasons]

There be for this man's ending, which
our Queen

And Council at this present deem it
not

Expedient to be known.

Protestant murmurs. I warrant
you.

Cole. Take therefore, all, example
by this man,

For if our Holy Queen not pardon
him,

Much less shall others in like cause
escape,

That all of you, the highest as the
lowest,

May learn there is no power against
the Lord.

There stands a man, once of so high degree,
 Chief prelate of our Church, arch-bishop, first
 In Council, second person in the realm,
 Friend for so long time of a mighty King;
 And now ye see downfallen and debased
 From councillor to caitiff—fallen so low,
 The leprous flutterings of the byway,
 And offal of the city would not change
 Estates with him; in brief, so miserable,
 There is no hope of better left for him,
 No place for worse.

Yet, Cranmer, be thou glad.
 This is the work of God. He is glorified
 In thy conversion: lo! thou art reclaim'd;
 He brings thee home: nor fear but that to-day
 Thou shalt receive the penitent thief's award,
 And be with Christ the Lord in Paradise.
 Remember how God made the fierce fire seem
 To those three children like a pleasant dew.
 Remember, too,
 The triumph of St. Andrew on his cross,
 The patience of St. Lawrence in the fire.
 Thus, if thou call on God and all the saints,
 God will beat down the fury of the flame,
 Or give thee saintly strength to undergo.
 And for thy soul shall masses here be sung
 By every priest in Oxford. Pray for him.

Cranmer. Ay, one and all, dear brothers, pray for me;

Pray with one breath, one heart, one soul for me.

Cole. And now, lest anyone among you doubt

The man's conversion and remorse of heart,

Yourselves shall hear him speak.
 Speak, Master Cranmer,

Fulfil your promise made me, and proclaim

Your true undoubted faith, that all may hear.

Cranmer. And that I will. O God, Father of Heaven!

O Son of God, Redeemer of the world!

O Holy Ghost! proceeding from them both,

Three persons and one God, have mercy on me,

Most miserable sinner, wretched man.
 I have offended against heaven and earth

More grievously than any tongue can tell.

Then whither should I flee for any help?

I am ashamed to lift my eyes to heaven,

And I can find no refuge upon earth.

Shall I despair then?—God forbid!
 O God,

For thou art merciful, refusing none
 That come to Thee for succor, unto Thee,

Therefore, I come; humble myself to Thee;

Saying, O Lord God, although my sins be great,

For thy great mercy have mercy! O God the Son,

Not for slight faults alone, when thou becamest

Man in the Flesh, was the great mystery wrought;

O God the Father, not for little sins
 Didst thou yield up thy Son to human death;

But for the greatest sin that can be sinn'd,

Yea, even such as mine, incalculable,
 Unpardonable,—sin against the light,

The truth of God, which I had proven
and known.
Thy mercy must be greater than all
sin.

Forgive me, Father, for no merit of
mine,

But that Thy name by man be glori-
fied,

And Thy most blessed Son's, who
died for man.

Good people, every man at time of
death

Would fain set forth some saying that
may live

After his death and better human-
kind;

For death gives life's last word a
power to live,

And, like the stone-cut epitaph, re-
main

After the vanish'd voice, and speak to
men.

God grant me grace to glorify my
God!

And first I say it is a grievous case,
Many so dote upon this bubble
world,

Whose colors in a moment break and
fly,

They care for nothing else. What
saith St. John :—

'Love of this world is hatred against
God.'

Again, I pray you all that, next to
God,

You do uncomplainingly and willingly
Obey your King and Queen, and not
for dread

Of these alone, but from the fear of
Him

Whose ministers they be to govern
you.

Thirdly, I pray you all to live together
Like brethren; yet what hatred Chris-
tian men

Bear to each other, seeming not as
brethren,

But mortal foes! But do you good
to all

As much as in you lieth. Hurt no
man more

Than you would harm your loving
natural brother

Of the same roof, same breast. If
any do,

Albeit he think himself at home with
God,

Of this be sure, he is whole worlds
away.

Protestant murmurs. What sort of
brothers then be those that lust

To burn each other?

Williams. Peace among you,
there!

Cranmer. Fourthly, to those that
own exceeding wealth,

Remember that sore saying spoken
once

By Him that was the truth, 'How
hard it is

For the rich man to enter into
Heaven;'

Let all rich men remember that hard
word.

I have not time for more: if ever,
now

Let them flow forth in charity, seeing
now

The poor so many, and all food so
dear.

Long have I lain in prison, yet have
heard

Of all their wretchedness. Give to
the poor,

Ye give to God. He is with us in the
poor.

And now, and forasmuch as I have
come

To the last end of life, and thereupon
Hangs all my past, and all my life to
be,

Either to live with Christ in Heaven
with joy,

Or to be still in pain with devils in
hell;

And, seeing in a moment, I shall find
[*Pointing upwards.*

Heaven or else hell ready to swallow
me,

[*Pointing downwards.*
I shall declare to you my very faith
Without all color.

Cole. Hear him, my good brethren.

Cranmer. I do believe in God,
Father of all;

In every article of the Catholic faith,

And every syllable taught us by our
Lord,
His prophets, and apostles, in the
Testaments,
Both Old and New.

Cole. Be plainer, Master Cranmer.

Cranmer. And now I come to the
great cause that weighs
Upon my conscience more than any-
thing
Or said or done in all my life by
me;

For there be writings I have set
abroad

Against the truth I knew within my
heart,

Written for fear of death, to save my
life,

If that might be; the papers by my
hand

Sign'd since my degradation—by this
hand

[*Holding out his right hand.*

Written and sign'd—I here renounce
them all;

And, since my hand offended, having
written

Against my heart, my hand shall first
be burnt,

So I may come to the fire.

[*Dead silence.*

Protestant murmurs.

First Protestant. I knew it would
be so.

Second Protestant. Our prayers are
heard!

Third Protestant. God bless him!

Catholic murmurs. Out upon him!
out upon him!

Liar! dissembler! traitor! to the
fire!

Williams (raising his voice). You
know that you recanted all you
said

Touching the sacrament in that same
book

You wrote against my Lord of Win-
chester;

Dissemble not; play the plain Chris-
tian man.

Cranmer. Alas, my Lord,
I have been a man loved plainness all
my life;

I *did* dissemble, but the hour has
come

For utter truth and plainness; where-
fore, I say,

I hold by all I wrote within that book.

Moreover,

As for the Pope I count him Anti-
christ,

With all his devil's doctrines; and
refuse,

Reject him, and abhor him. I have
said.

[*Cries on all sides, 'Pull him
down! Away with him!'*

Cole. Ay, stop the heretic's mouth!
Hale him away!

Williams. Harm him not, harm
him not! have him to the fire!

[*CRANMER goes out between Two
Friars, smiling; hands are
reached to him from the crowd.
LORD WILLIAM HOWARD and
LORD PAGET are left alone in
the church.*

Paget. The nave and aisles all
empty as a fool's jest!

No, here's Lord William Howard.
What, my Lord,

You have not gone to see the burn-
ing?

Howard. Fie!

To stand at ease, and stare as at a
show,

And watch a good man burn. Never
again.

I saw the deaths of Latimer and Rid-
ley.

Moreover, tho' a Catholic, I would
not,

For the pure honor of our common
nature

Hear what I might—another recan-
tation

Of Cranmer at the stake.

Paget. You'd not hear that.
He pass'd out smiling, and he walk'd

upright;
His eye was like a soldier's, whom
the general

He looks to and he leans on as his
God,

Hath rated for some backwardness
and bidd'n him

Charge one against a thousand, and
the man
Hurls his soil'd life against the pikes
and dies.

Howard. Yet that he might not
after all those papers
Of recantation yield again, who
knows?

Paget. Papers of recantation !
Think you then
That Cranmer read all papers that he
sign'd ?

Or sign'd all those they tell us that he
sign'd ?

Nay, I trow not : and you shall see,
my Lord,

That howsoever hero-like the man
Dies in the fire, this Bonner or
another

Will in some lying fashion misreport
His ending to the glory of their
church.

And you saw Latimer and Ridley die ?
Latimer was eighty, was he not ? his
best

Of life was over then.

Howard. His eighty years
Look'd somewhat crooked on him in
his frieze ;

But after they had stript him to his
shroud,

He stood upright, a lad of twenty-
one,

And gather'd with his hands the start-
ing flame,

And wash'd his hands and all his face
therein,

Until the powder suddenly blew him
dead.

Ridley was longer burning ; but he
died

As manfully and boldly, and, 'fore
God,

I know them heretics, but right Eng-
lish ones.

If ever, as heaven grant, we clash
with Spain,

Our Ridley-soldiers and our Latimer-
soldiers

Will teach her something.

Paget. Your mild Legate Pole
Will tell you that the devil helpt them
thro' it.

[*A murmur of the Crowd in the
distance.*]

Hark, how those Roman wolfdogs
howl and bay him !

Howard. Might it not be the other
side rejoicing

In his brave end ?

Paget. They are too crush'd, too
broken,

They can but weep in silence.

Howard. Ay, ay, Paget,
They have brought it in large meas-
ure on themselves.

Have I not heard them mock the
blessed Host

In songs so lewd, the beast might
roar his claim

To being in God's image, more than
they ?

Have I not seen the gamekeeper, the
groom,

Gardener, and huntsman, in the par-
son's place,

The parson from his own spire swung
out dead,

And Ignorance crying in the streets,
and all men

Regarding her ? I say they have
drawn the fire

On their own heads : yet, Paget, I do
hold

The Catholic, if he have the greater
right,

Hath been the crueller.

Paget. Action and re-action,
The miserable see-saw of our child-
world,

Make us despise it at odd hours, my
Lord.

Heaven help that this re-action not
re-act

Yet fiercelier under Queen Eliza-
beth,

So that she come to rule us.

Howard. The world's mad.

Paget. My Lord, the world is like
a drunken man,

Who cannot move straight to his end
—but reels

Now to the right, then as far to the
left,

Push'd by the crowd beside—and
underfoot

An earthquake; for since Henry for
a doubt—

Which a young lust had clapt upon
the back,

Crying, 'Forward!'—set our old
church rocking, men

Have hardly known what to believe,
or whether

They should believe in anything; the
currents

So shift and change, they see not
how they are borne,

Nor whither. I conclude the King a
beast;

Verily a lion if you will—the world
A most obedient beast and fool—myself

Half beast and fool as appertaining
to it

Altho' your Lordship hath as little of
each

Cleaving to your original Adam-clay,
As may be consonant with mortality.

Howard. We talk and Cranmer
suffers.

The kindest man I ever knew; see,
see,

I speak of him in the past. Unhappy
land!

Hard-natured Queen, half-Spanish in
herself,

And grafted on the hard-grain'd stock
of Spain—

Her life, since Philip left her, and she
lost

Her fierce desire of bearing him a
child,

Hath, like a brief and bitter winter's
day,

Gone narrowing down and darkening
to a close.

There will be more conspiracies, I
fear.

Paget. Ay, ay, beware of France.

Howard. O Paget, Paget!
I have seen heretics of the poorer

sort,
Expectant of the rack from day to

day,
To whom the fire were welcome, lying

chain'd
In breathless dungeons over steaming

sewers,

Fed with rank bread that crawl'd
upon the tongue,

And putrid water, every drop a worm.
Until they died of rotted limbs; and
then

Cast on the dunghill naked, and be-
come

Hideously alive again from head to
heel,

Made even the carrion-nosing mon-
grel vomit

With hate and horror.

Paget. Nay, you sicken *me*
To hear you.

Howard. Fancy-sick; these things
are done,

Done right against the promise of this
Queen

Twice given.

Paget. No faith with heretics, my
Lord!

Hist! there be two old gossips—
gospellers,

I take it; stand behind the pillar
here;

I warrant you they talk about the
burning.

*Enter Two OLD WOMEN. JOAN,
and after her TIB.*

Joan. Why, it be Tib!

Tib. I cum behind tha, gall, and
couldn't make tha hear. Eh, the
wind and the wet! What a day, what
a day! nigh upo' judgement daay loike.
Pwoaps be pretty things, Joan, but
they wunt set i' the Lord's cheer o'
that daay.

Joan. I must set down myself,
Tib; it be a var waay vor my owld
legs up vro' Islip. Eh, my rheuma-
tize be that bad howiver be I to win to
the burnin'.

Tib. I should saay 'twur ower by
now. I'd ha' been here avore, but
Dumble wur blow'd wi' the wind, and
Dumble's the best milcher in Islip.

Joan. Our Daisy's as good 'z her

Tib. Noa, Joan.

Joan. Our Daisy's butter's as good
'z hern.

Tib. Noa, Joan.

Joan. Our Daisy's cheeses be better.

Tib. Noa, Joan.

Joan. Eh, then ha' thy waay wi' me, Tib; ez thou hast wi' thy owld man.

Tib. Ay, Joan, and my owld man wur up and awaay betimes wi' dree hard eggs for a good plect at the burnin'; and barrin' the wet, Hodge 'ud ha' been a-barrowin' o' white peasen i' the outfield—and barrin' the wind, Dumble wur blow'd wi' the wind, so 'z we was forced to stick her, but we fetched her round at last. Thank the Lord therevore. Dumble's the best milcher in Islip.

Joan. Thou's thy way wi' man and beast, Tib. I wonder at tha', it beats me! Eh, but I do know ez Pwoaps and vire be bad things; tell 'ee now, I heerd summat as summun towld summun o' owld Bishop Gardiner's end; there wur an owld lord a-cum to dine wi' un, and a wur so owld a couldn't bide vor his dinner, but a had to bide howsomiver, vor 'I wunt dine,' says my Lord Bishop, says he, 'not till I hears ez Latimer and Ridley be a-vire;' and so they bided on and on till vour o' the clock, till his man cum in post vro' here and tells un ez the vire has tuk holt. 'Now,' says the Bishop, says he, 'we'll gwo to dinner;' and the owld lord fell to 's meat wi' a will, God bless un! but Gardiner wur struck down like by the hand o' God avore a could taste a mossel, and a set un all a-vire, so 'z the tongue on un cum a-lolling out o' 'is mouth as black as a rat. Thank the Lord, therevore.

Puget. The fools!

Tib. Ay, Joan; and Queen Mary gwoes on a-burnin' and a-burnin', to get her baaby born: but all her burnin's 'ill never burn out the hypocrisy that makes the water in her. There's nought but the vire of God's hell ez can burn out that.

Joan. Thank the Lord, therevore.

Puget. The fools!

Tib. A-burnin', and a-burnin', and

a-makin' 'o volk madder and madder; but tek thou my word vor't, Joan,—and I bean't wrong not twice 'i ten year—the burnin' o' the owld archbishop 'll burn the Pwoap out o' this 'ere land vor iver and iver.

Howard. Out of the church, you brace of cursed crones, Or I will have you duck'd! (*Women hurry out.*) Said I not right? For how should reverend prelate or throned prince Brook for an hour such brute malignity?

Ah, what an acrid wine has Luther brew'd!

Puget. Pooh, pooh, my Lord! poor garrulous country-wives.

Buy you their cheeses, and they'll side with you;

You cannot judge the liquor from the lees.

Howard. I think that in some sort we may. But see,

Enter PETERS.

Peters, my gentleman, an honest Catholic,

Who follow'd with the crowd to Cranmer's fire.

One that would neither misreport nor lie,

Not to gain paradise: no, nor if the Pope,

Charged him to do it—he is white as death.

Peters, how pale you look! you bring the smoke

Of Cranmer's burning with you.

Peters. Twice or thrice The smoke of Cranmer's burning wrapt me round.

Howard. Peters, you know me Catholic, but English.

Did he die bravely? Tell me that, or leave

All else untold.

Peters. My Lord, he died most bravely.

Howard. Then tell me all.

Puget. Ay, Master Peters, tell us.

Peters. You saw him how he past
among the crowd;
And ever as he walk'd the Spanish
friars
Still plied him with entreaty and re-
proach:
But Cranmer, as the helmsman at the
helm
Steers, ever looking to the happy
haven
Where he shall rest at night, moved to
his death;
And I could see that many silent
hands
Came from the crowd and met his
own; and thus,
When we had come where Ridley
burnt with Latimer,
He, with a cheerful smile, as one
whose mind
Is all made up, in haste put off the
rags
They had mock'd his misery with, and
all in white,
His long white beard, which he had
never shaven
Since Henry's death, down-sweeping
to the chain,
Wherewith they bound him to the
stake, he stood
More like an ancient father of the
Church,
Than heretic of these times; and still
plied him, but Cranmer only shook
his head,
Or answer'd them in smiling nega-
tives;
Whereat Lord Williams gave a sud-
den cry:—
'Make short! make short!' and so
they lit the wood.
Then Cranmer lifted his left hand to
heaven,
And thrust his right into the bitter
flame;
And crying, in his deep voice, more
than once,
'This hath offended—this unworthy
hand!'
So held it till it all was burn'd, before
The flame had reach'd his body; I
stood near—

Mark'd him—he never uttered moan
of pain:
He never stirr'd or writhed, but, like
a statue,
Unmoving in the greatness of the
flame,
Gave up the ghost; and so past mar-
tyr-like—
Martyr I may not call him—past—
but whither?
Paget. To purgatory, man, to pur-
gatory.
Peters. Nay, but, my Lord, he
denied purgatory.
Paget. Why then to Heaven, and
God ha' mercy on him.
Howard. Paget, despite his fearful
heresies,
I loved the man, and needs must
moan for him;
O Cranmer!
Paget. But your moan is useless
now:
Come out, my Lord, it is a world of
fools. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT V.

SCENE I.—LONDON. HALL IN THE
PALACE.

QUEEN, SIR NICHOLAS HEATH.

Heath. Madam,
I do assure you, that it must be look'd
to:
Calais is but ill-garrison'd, in Guisnes
Are scarce two hundred men, and the
French fleet
Rule in the narrow seas. It must be
look'd to,
If war should fall between yourself
and France;
Or you will lose your Calais.
Mary. It shall be look'd to;
I wish you a good morning, good Sir
Nicholas:
Here is the King. [*Exit Heath.*]

*Enter PHILIP.**Philip.* Sir Nicholas tells you true,

And you must look to Calais when I go.

Mary. Go? must you go, indeed—again—so soon?

Why, nature's licensed vagabond, the swallow,

That might live always in the sun's warm heart.

Stays longer here in our poor north than you:—

Knows where he nested—ever comes again.

Philip. And, Madam, so shall I.

Mary. O, will you? will you? I am faint with fear that you will come no more.

Philip. Ay, ay; but many voices call me hence.

Mary. Voices—I hear unhappy rumors—nay, I say not, I believe. What voices call you

Dearer than mine that should be dearest to you?

Alas, my Lord! what voices and how many?

Philip. The voices of Castille and Aragon, Granada, Naples, Sicily, and Milan,—The voices of Franche-Comté, and the Netherlands, The voices of Peru and Mexico, Tunis, and Oran, and the Philippines, And all the fair spice-islands of the East.

Mary (admiringly). You are the mightiest monarch upon earth, I but a little Queen: and, so indeed,

Need you the more.

Philip. A little Queen! but when I came to wed your majesty, Lord Howard,

Sending an insolent shot that dash'd the seas

Upon us, made us lower our kingly flag

To yours of England.

Mary. Howard is all English! There is no king, not were he ten times king,

Ten times our husband, but must lower his flag

To that of England in the seas of England.

Philip. Is that your answer?

Mary. Being Queen of England, I have none other.

Philip. So.

Mary. But wherefore not Helm the huge vessel of your state, my liege, Here by the side of her who loves you most?

Philip. No, Madam, no! a candle in the sun

Is all but smoke—a star beside the moon

Is all but lost; your people will not crown me—

Your people are as cheerless as your clime;

Hate me and mine: witness the brawls, the gibbets.

Here swings a Spaniard—there an Englishman;

The peoples are unlike as their complexion;

Yet will I be your swallow and return—

But now I cannot bide.

Mary. Not to help me? They hate me also for my love to you, My Philip; and these judgments on the land—

Harvestless autumns, horrible agues, plague—

Philip. The blood and sweat of heretics at the stake

Is God's best dew upon the barren field.

Burn more!

Mary. I will, I will; and you will stay?

Philip. Have I not said? Madam, I came to sue

Your Council and yourself to declare war.

Mary. Sir, there are many English in your ranks

To help your battle.

Philip. So far, good. I say I came to sue your Council and yourself

To declare war against the King of France.

Mary. Not to see me?

Philip. Ay, Madam, to see you.
Unalterably and pesteringly fond!

[*Aside.*]

But, soon or late you must have war
with France;

King Henry warms your traitors at
his hearth.

Carew is there, and Thomas Stafford
there.

Courtenay, belike—

Mary. A fool and featherhead!

Philip. Ay, but they use his name.

In brief, this Henry
Stirs up your land against you to the
intent

That you may lose your English heri-
tage.

And then, your Scottish namesake
marrying

The Dauphin, he would weld France,
England, Scotland,

Into one sword to hack at Spain and
me.

Mary. And yet the Pope is now
colleagu'd with France;

You make your wars upon him down
in Italy:—

Philip. can that be such?

Philip. Content you, Madam;
You must abide my judgment, and
my father's,

Who deems it a most just and holy
war.

The Pope would cast the Spaniard
out of Naples:

He calls us worse than Jews, Moors,
Saracens.

The Pope has pushed his horns be-
yond his mitre—

Beyond his province. Now,
Duke Alva will but touch him on the
horns,

And he withdraws; and of his holy
head—

For Alva 's true son of the true
church—

No hair is harm'd. Will you not help
me here?

Mary. Alas! the Council will not
hear of war.

They say your wars are not the wars
of England.

They will not lay more taxes on a land
So hunger-nipt and wretched; and
you know

The crown is poor. We have given
the church-lands back:

The nobles would not; nay, they
clapt their hands

Upon their swords when ask'd; and
therefore God

Is hard upon the people. What's to
be done?

Sir, I will move them in your cause
again.

And we will raise us loans and subsi-
dies

Among the merchants; and Sir
Thomas Gresham

Will aid us. There is Antwerp and
the Jews.

Philip. Madam, my thanks.

Mary. And you will stay your
going?

Philip. And further to discourage
and lay lame

The plots of France, altho' you love
her not.

You must proclaim Elizabeth your
heir.

She stands between you and the
Queen of Scots.

Mary. The Queen of Scots at
least is Catholic.

Philip. Ay, Madam, Catholic; but
I will not have

The King of France the King of
England too.

Mary. But she's a heretic, and,
when I am gone,

Brings the new learning back.

Philip. It must be done.

You must proclaim Elizabeth your
heir.

Mary. Then it is done; but you
will stay your going

Somewhat beyond your settled pur-
pose?

Philip. No!

Mary. What, not one day?

Philip. You beat upon the rock.

Mary. And I am broken there.

Philip. Is this a place

To wail in, Madam? what! a public
hall.

Go in, I pray you.

Mary. Do not seem so changed.
Say go; but only say it lovingly.

Philip. You do mistake. I am
not one to change.

I never loved you more.

Mary. Sire, I obey you.

Come quickly.

Philip. Ay. [Exit Mary.]

Enter COUNT DE FERIA.

Feria (aside). The Queen in tears!

Philip. Feria!

Hast thou not mark'd—come closer
to mine ear—

How doubly aged this Queen of ours
hath grown

Since she lost hope of bearing us a
child?

Feria. Sire, if your Grace hath
mark'd it, so have I.

Philip. Hast thou not likewise
mark'd Elizabeth,

How fair and royal—like a Queen, in-
deed?

Feria. Allow me the same answer
as before—

That if your Grace hath mark'd her,
so have I.

Philip. Good, now; methinks my
Queen is like enough

To leave me by and by.

Feria. To leave you, sire?

Philip. I mean not like to live.
Elizabeth—

To Philibert of Savoy, as you know,
We meant to wed her; but I am not
sure

She will not serve me better—so my
Queen

Would leave me—as—my wife.

Feria. Sire, even so.

Philip. She will not have Prince
Philibert of Savoy.

Feria. No, sire.

Philip. I have to pray you, some
odd time,

To sound the Princess carelessly on
this;

Not as from me, but as your phan-
tasy;

And tell me how she takes it.

Feria. Sire, I will.

Philip. I am not certain but that
Philibert

Shall be the man; and I shall urge
his suit

Upon the Queen, because I am not
certain:

You understand, Feria.

Feria. Sire, I do.

Philip. And if you be not secret in
this matter,

You understand me there, too?

Feria. Sire, I do.

Philip. You must be sweet and
supple, like a Frenchman.

She is none of those who loathe the
honeycomb. [Exit Feria.]

Enter RENARD.

Renard. My liege, I bring you
goodly tidings.

Philip. Well?

Renard. There will be war with
France, at last, my liege;

Sir Thomas Stafford, a bull-headed
ass,

Sailing from France, with thirty Eng-
lishmen,

Hath taken Scarboro' Castle, north of
York;

Proclaims himself protector, and
affirms

The Queen has forfeited her right to
reign

By marriage with an alien—other
things

As idle; a weak Wyatt! Little
doubt

This buzz will soon be silenced; but
the Council

(I have talk'd with some already) are
for war.

This is the fifth conspiracy hatch'd in
France;

They show their teeth upon it; and
your Grace.

So you will take advice of mine, should
stay

Yet for awhile, to shape and guide
the event.

Philip. Good! Renard, I will stay
then.

Renard. Also, sire,
Might I not say—to please your wife,
the Queen?

Philip. Ay, Renard, if you care to
put it so. [Exit.

SCENE II.—A ROOM IN THE
PALACE.

MARY, sitting: a rose in her hand.
LADY CLARENCE. ALICE, in the
background.

Mary. Look! I have play'd with
this poor rose so long
I have broken off the head.

Lady Clarence. Your Grace hath
been
More merciful to many a rebel head
That should have fallen, and may rise
again.

Mary. There were not many
hang'd for Wyatt's rising.

Lady Clarence. Nay, not two hun-
dred.

Mary. I could weep for them
And her, and mine own self and all
the world.

Lady Clarence. For her? for
whom, your Grace?

Enter USHER.

Usher. The Cardinal.

*Enter CARDINAL POLE. (MARY
rises.)*

Mary. Reginald Pole, what news
hath plagued thy heart?
What makes thy favor like the blood-
less head

Fall'n on the block, and held up by
the hair?

Philip?—

Pole. No, Philip is as warm in life
As ever.

Mary. Ay, and then as cold as
ever. Is Calais taken?

Pole. Cousin, there hath chanced
A sharper harm to England and to
Rome,
Than Calais taken. Julius the Third

Was ever just, and mild, and father-
like;

But this new Pope Caraffa, Paul the
Fourth,

Not only reft me of that legateship
Which Julius gave me, and the legate-
ship

Annex'd to Canterbury—nay, but
worse—

And yet I must obey the Holy Father,
And so must you, good cousin;—worse
than all,

A passing bell toll'd in a dying ear—
He hath cited me to Rome, for
heresy,

Before his Inquisition.

Mary. I knew it, cousin,
But held from you all papers sent by
Rome,

That you might rest among us, till the
Pope,

To compass which I wrote myself to
Rome,

Reversed his doom, and that you
might not seem

To disobey his Holiness.

Pole. He hates Philip;
He is all Italian, and he hates the
Spaniard;

He cannot dream that I advised the
war;

He strikes thro' me at Philip and
yourself.

Nay, but I know it of old, he hates
me too;

So brands me in the stare of Christen-
dom

A heretic!

Now, even now, when bow'd before
my time,

The house half-ruin'd ere the lease be
out;

When I should guide the Church in
peace at home,

After my twenty years of banishment,
And all my lifelong labor to uphold

The primacy—a heretic. Long ago,
When I was ruler in the patrimony,

I was too lenient to the Lutheran,
And I and learned friends among our-
selves

Would freely canvass certain Luther-
anisms.

What then, he knew I was no
Lutheran.

A heretic!

He drew this shaft against me to the
head,

When it was thought I might be
chosen Pope,

But then withdrew it. In full consi-
stency,

When I was made Archbishop, he
approved me.

And how should he have sent me
Legate hither,

Deeming me heretic? and what
heresy since?

But he was evermore mine enemy,

And hates the Spaniard—fiery-
choleric,

A drinker of black, strong, volcanic
wines,

That ever make him fiercer. I, a here-
tic?

Your Highness knows that in pursu-
ing heresy

I have gone beyond your late Lord
Chancellor.—

He cried Enough! enough! before
his death.—

Gone beyond him and mine own nat-
ural man

(It was God's cause); so far they call
me now,

The scourge and butcher of their
English church.

Mary. Have courage, your reward
is Heaven itself.

Pole. They groan amen; they
swarm into the fire

Like flies—for what? no dogma.
They know nothing;

They burn for nothing.

Mary. You have done your best.

Pole. Have done my best, and as
a faithful son,

That all day long hath wrought his
father's work,

When back he comes at evening hath
the door

Shut on him by the father whom he
loved,

His early follies cast into his teeth,
And the poor son turn'd out into the
street.

To sleep, to die—I shall die of it,
cousin.

Mary. I pray you be not so dis-
consolate;

I still will do mine utmost with the
Pope.

Poor cousin!

Have not I been the fast friend of
your life

Since mine began, and it was thought
we two

Might make one flesh, and cleave
unto each other

As man and wife?

Pole. Ah, cousin, I remember
How I would dandle you upon my
knee

At lisping-age. I watch'd you danc-
ing once

With your huge father; he look'd the
Great Harry,

You but his cockboat; prettily you
did it,

And innocently. No—we were not
made

One flesh in happiness, no happiness
here;

But now we are made one flesh in
misery;

Our bridesmaids are not lovely—Dis-
appointment,

Ingratitude, Injustice, Evil-tongue,
Labor-in-vain.

Mary. Surely, not all in vain.

Peace, cousin, peace! I am sad at
heart myself.

Pole. Our altar is a mound of
dead men's clay,

Dug from the grave that yawns for
us beyond;

And there is one Death stands be-
hind the Groom,

And there is one Death stands be-
hind the Bride—

Mary. Have you been looking at
the 'Dance of Death'?

Pole. No; but these libellous pa-
pers which I found

Strewn in your palace. Look you
here—the Pope

Pointing at me with 'Pole, the heretic,
Thou hast burnt others, do thou burn
thyself,

Or I will burn thee; ' and this other ;
see !—

' We pray continually for the death
Of our accursed Queen and Cardinal
Pole.'

This last—I dare not read it her.

[*Aside.*

Mary.

Why do you bring me these ?

I thought you knew me better. I
never read,

I tear them ; they come back upon
my dreams.

The hands that write them should be
burnt clean off

As Cranmer's, and the fiends that
utter them

Tongue-torn with pincers, lash'd to
death, or lie

Famishing in black cells, while
famish'd rats

Eat them alive. Why do they bring
me these ?

Do you mean to drive me mad ?

Pole.

I had forgotten
How these poor libels trouble you.

Your pardon,
Sweet cousin, and farewell ! ' O bubble world,

Whose colors in a moment break and
fly !'

Why, who said that ? I know not—
true enough !

[*Puts up the papers, all but the last, which falls. Exit Pole.*

Alice. If Cranmer's spirit were a
mocking one,

And heard these two, there might be
sport for him. [*Aside.*

Mary. Clarence, they hate me ;
even while I speak

There lurks a silent dagger, listening
In some dark closet, some long gallery, drawn,

And panting for my blood as I go by.

Lady Clarence. Nay, Madam, there
be loyal papers too,

And I have often found them.

Mary.

Find me one !

Lady Clarence. Av, Madam ; but
Sir Nicholas Heath, the Chancellor,

Would see your Highness.

Mary. Wherefore should I see
him ?

Lady Clarence. Well, Madam, he
may bring you news from
Philip.

Mary. So, Clarence.

Lady Clarence. Let me first put
up your hair ;

It tumbles all abroad.

Mary. And the gray dawn
Of an old age that never will be
mine

Is all the clearer seen. No, no ; what
matters ?

Forlorn I am, and let me look forlorn.

Enter SIR NICHOLAS HEATH.

Heath. I bring your Majesty such
grievous news

I grieve to bring it. Madam, Calais
is taken.

Mary. What traitor spoke ? Here,
let my cousin Pole

Seize him and burn him for a Lutheran.

Heath. Her Highness is unwell.
I will retire.

Lady Clarence. Madam, your
Chancellor, Sir Nicholas
Heath.

Mary. Sir Nicholas ! I am stunn'd
—Nicholas Heath ?

Methought some traitor smote me on
the head.

What said you, my good Lord, that
our brave English

Had sallied out from Calais and
driven back

The Frenchmen from their trenches ?

Heath.

Alas ! no.
That gateway to the mainland over
which

Our flag hath floated for two hundred
years

Is France again.

Mary. So ; but it is not lost—
Not yet. Send out : let England as
of old

Rise lionlike, strike hard and deep
into

The prey they are rending from her
—ay, and rend

The renders too. Send out, send out,
and make
Musters in all the counties; gather
all
From sixteen years to sixty; collect
the fleet;
Let every craft that carries sail and
gun
Steer toward Calais. Guisnes is not
taken yet?

Heath. Guisnes is not taken yet.

Mary. There yet is hope.

Heath. Ah, Madam, but your people
are so cold;

I do much fear that England will not
care.

Methinks there is no manhood left
among us.

Mary. Send out; I am too weak
to stir abroad:

Tell my mind to the Council—to the
Parliament:

Proclaim it to the winds. Thou art
cold thyself

To babble of their coldness. O
would I were

My father for an hour! Away now—
Quick! [*Exit Heath.*]

I hoped I had served God with all
my might!

It seems I have not. Ah! much
heresy

Shelter'd in Calais. Saints, I have
rebuilt

Your shrines, set up your broken
images;

Be comfortable to me. Suffer not
That my brief reign in England be de-
famed

Thro' all her angry chronicles here-
after

By loss of Calais. Grant me Calais.
Philip,

We have made war upon the Holy
Father

All for your sake: what good could
come of that?

Lady Clarence. No, Madam, not
against the Holy Father;

You did but help King Philip's war
with France,

Your troops were never down in
Italy.

Mary. I am a byword. Heretic
and rebel

Point at me and make merry. Philip
gone!

And Calais gone! Time that I were
gone too!

Lady Clarence. Nay, if the fetid
gutter had a voice

And cried I was not clean, what
should I care?

Or you, for heretic cries? And I be-
lieve,

Spite of your melancholy Sir Nicho-
las,

Your England is as loyal as myself.

Mary (*Seeing the paper dropt by
Pole*).

There! there! another paper!
Said you not

Many of these were loyal? Shall I
try

If this be one of such?

Lady Clarence. Let it be, let it be.
God pardon me! I have never yet

found one. [*Aside.*]

Mary (*reads*). 'Your people hate
you as your husband hates you.'

Clarence, Clarence, what have I done?
what sin

Beyond all grace, all pardon? Mother
of God,

Thou knowest never woman meant so
well,

And fared so ill in this disastrous
world.

My people hate me and desire my
death.

Lady Clarence. No, Madam, no.

Mary. My husband hates me, and
desires my death.

Lady Clarence. No, Madam; these
are libels.

Mary. I hate myself, and I desire
my death.

Lady Clarence. Long live your
Majesty! Shall Alice sing you

One of her pleasant songs? Alice,
my child,

Bring us your lute (*Alice goes*). They
say the gloom of Saul

Was lighten'd by young David's harp.

Mary. Too young!
And never knew a Philip.

Re-enter Alice.

Give *me* the lute.

He hates me!

(She sings.)

Hapless doom of woman happy in betrothing!

Beauty passes like a breath and love is lost in loathing:

Low, my lute; speak low, my lute, but say the world is nothing—

Low, lute, low!

Love will hover round the flowers when they first awaken;

Love will fly the fallen leaf, and not be overtaken;

Low, my lute! oh low, my lute! we fade and are forsaken—

Low, dear lute, low!

Take it away! not low enough for me!
Alice. Your Grace hath a low voice.

Mary. How dare you say it? Even for that he hates me. A low voice

Lost in a wilderness where none can hear!

A voice of shipwreck on a shoreless sea!

A low voice from the dust and from the grave

(Sitting on the ground). There, am I low enough now?

Alice. Good Lord! how grim and ghastly looks her Grace, With both her knees drawn upward to her chin.

There was an old-world tomb beside my father's,

And this was open'd, and the dead were found

Sitting, and in this fashion; she looks a corpse.

Enter LADY MAGDALEN DACRES.

Lady Magdalen. Madam, the Count de Feria waits without, In hopes to see your Highness.

Lady Clarence (pointing to Mary).

Wait he must—

Her trance again. She neither sees nor hears, And may not speak for hours.

Lady Magdalen. Unhappiest Of Queens and wives and women!

Alice (in the foreground with Lady Magdalen). And all along Of Philip.

Lady Magdalen. Not so loud! Our Clarence there

Sees ever such an aureole round the Queen,

It gilds the greatest wronger of her peace,

Who stands the nearest to her.

Alice. Ay, this Philip; I used to love the Queen with all my heart—

God help me, but methinks I love her less

For such a dotage upon such a man.

I would I were as tall and strong as you.

Lady Magdalen. I seem half-shamed at times to be so tall.

Alice. You are the stateliest deer in all the herd—

Beyond his aim—but I am small and scandalous,

And love to hear bad tales of Philip. *Lady Magdalen.* Why?

I never heard him utter worse of you Than that you were low-statured.

Alice. Does he think Low stature is low nature, or all women's

Low as his own?

Lady Magdalen. There you strike in the nail.

This coarseness is a want of phantasy. It is the low man thinks the woman low;

Sin is too dull to see beyond himself.

Alice. Ah, Magdalen, sin is bold as well as dull.

How dared he?

Lady Magdalen. Stupid soldiers oft are bold.

Poor lads, they see not what the general sees,

A risk of utter ruin. I am not

Beyond his aim, or was not.

Alice. Who? Not you?

Tell, tell me; save my credit with myself.

Lady Magdalen. I never breathed it to a bird in the eaves, Would not for all the stars and maiden moon

Our drooping Queen should know! In Hampton Court

My window look'd upon the corridor;

And I was robing;—this poor throat of mine,

Barer than I should wish a man to see it,—

When he we speak of drove the window back,

And, like a thief, push'd in his royal hand;

But by God's providence a good stout staff

Lay near me; and you know me strong of arm;

I do believe I lamed his Majesty's For a day or two, tho', give the Devil his due,

I never found he bore me any spite.

Alice. I would she could have wedded that poor youth,

My Lord of Devon—light enough, God knows,

And mixt with Wyatt's rising—and the boy

Not out of him—but neither cold, coarse, cruel,

And more than all—no Spaniard.

Lady Clarence. Not so loud. Lord Devon, girls! what are you whispering here?

Alice. Probing an old state-secret—how it chanced

That this young Earl was sent on foreign travel,

Not lost his head.

Lady Clarence. There was no proof against him.

Alice. Nay, Madam; did not Gardiner intercept

A letter which the Count de Noailles wrote

To that dead traitor Wyatt, with full proof

Of Courtenay's treason? What became of that?

Lady Clarence. Some say that Gardiner, out of love for him, Burnt it, and some relate that it was lost

When Wyatt sack'd the Chancellor's house in Southwark.

Let dead things rest.

Alice. Ay, and with him who died Alone in Italy.

Lady Clarence. Much changed, I hear,

Had put off levity and put graveness on.

The foreign courts report him in his manner

Noble as his young person and old shield.

It might be so—but all is over now; He caught a chill in the lagoons of Venice,

And died in Padua.

Mary (looking up suddenly). Died in the true faith?

Lady Clarence. Ay, Madam, happily.

Mary. Happier he than I.

Lady Magdalen. It seems her Highness hath awaken'd.

Think you That I might dare to tell her that the Count—

Mary. I will see no man hence for evermore,

Saving my confessor and my cousin Pole.

Lady Magdalen. It is the Count de Feria, my dear lady.

Mary. What Count?

Lady Magdalen. The Count de Feria, from his Majesty

King Philip.

Mary. Philip! quick! loop up my hair!

Throw cushions on that seat, and make it throne-like.

Arrange my dress—the gorgeous Indian shawl

That Philip brought me in our happy days!—

That covers all. So—am I somewhat Queenlike,

Bride of the mightiest sovereign upon earth?

Lady Clarence. Ay, so your Grace would bide a moment yet.

Mary. No, no, he brings a letter. I may die

Before I read it. Let me see him at once.

Enter COUNT DE FERIA (kneels).

Feria. I trust your Grace is well.

(Aside) How her hand burns!

Mary. I am not well, but it will better me,

Sir Count, to read the letter which you bring.

Feria. Madam, I bring no letter.

Mary. How! no letter?

Feria. His Highness is so vex'd with strange affairs—

Mary. That his own wife is no affair of his.

Feria. Nay, Madam, nay! he sends his veriest love,

And says, he will come quickly.

Mary. Doth he, indeed?

You, sir, do you remember what you said

When last you came to England?

Feria. Madam, I brought My King's congratulations; it was hoped

Your Highness was once more in happy state

To give him an heir male.

Mary. Sir, you said more; You said he would come quickly. I had horses

On all the road from Dover, day and night;

On all the road from Harwich, night and day;

But the child came not, and the husband came not;

And yet he will come quickly. . .

Thou hast learnt

Thy lesson, and I mine. There is no need

For Philip so to shame himself again. Return,

And tell him that I know he comes no more.

Tell him at last I know his love is dead,

And that I am in state to bring forth death—

Thou art commission'd to Elizabeth, And not to me!

Feria. Mere compliments and wishes.

But shall I take some message from your Grace?

Mary. Tell her to come and close my dying eyes,

And wear my crown, and dance upon my grave.

Feria. Then I may say your Grace will see your sister?

Your Grace is too low-spirited. Air and sunshine.

I would we had you, Madam, in our warm Spain.

You droop in your dim London.

Mary. Have him away! I sicken of his readiness.

Lady Clarence. My Lord Count, Her Highness is too ill for colloquy.

Feria (kneels, and kisses her hand). I wish her Highness better.

(Aside) How her hand burns! *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE III.—A HOUSE NEAR LONDON.

ELIZABETH, STEWARD OF THE HOUSEHOLD, ATTENDANTS.

Elizabeth. There's half an angel wrong'd in your account;

Methinks I am all angel, that I bear it

Without more ruffling. Cast it o'er again.

Steward. I were whole devil if I wrong'd you, Madam.

[Exit Steward.]

Attendant. The Count de Feria, from the King of Spain.

Elizabeth. Ah!—let him enter. Nay, you need not go:

[To her Ladies.]

Remain within the chamber, but apart.

We'll have no private conference. Welcome to England!

Enter FERIA.

Feria. Fair island star!

Elizabeth. I shine! What else,
Sir Count?

Feria. As far as France, and into
Philip's heart.

My King would know if you be fairly
served,

And lodged, and treated.

Elizabeth. You see the lodging, sir,
I am well-served, and am in every-
thing

Most loyal and most grateful to the
Queen.

Feria. You should be grateful to
my master, too.

He spoke of this; and unto him you
owe

That Mary hath acknowledged you
her heir.

Elizabeth. No, not to her nor him;
but to the people,

Who know my right, and love me, as
I love

The people! whom God aid!

Feria. You will be Queen,

And, were I Philip—

Elizabeth. Wherefore pause you—
what?

Feria. Nay, but I speak from mine
own self, not him;

Your royal sister cannot last; your
hand

Will be much coveted! What a
delicate one!

Our Spanish ladies have none such—
and there,

Were you in Spain, this fine fair
gossamer gold—

Like sun-gilt breathings on a frosty
dawn—

That hovers round your shoulder—

Elizabeth. Is it so fine?
Troth, some have said so.

Feria. —would be deemed a mir-
acle.

Elizabeth. Your Philip hath gold
hair and golden beard;

There must be ladies many with hair
like mine.

Feria. Some few of Gothic blood
have golden hair,

But none like yours.

Elizabeth. I am happy you ap-
prove it.

Feria. But as to Philip and your
Grace—consider,—

If such a one as you should match
with Spain,

What hinders but that Spain and
England join'd,

Should make the mightiest empire
earth has known.

Spain would be England on her seas,
and England

Mistress of the Indies.

Elizabeth. It may chance, that
England

Will be the Mistress of the Indies
yet,

Without the help of Spain.

Feria. Impossible;
Except you put Spain down.

Wide of the mark ev'n for a mad-
man's dream.

Elizabeth. Perhaps; but we have
seamen. Count de Feria,

I take it that the King hath spoken
to you;

But is Don Carlos such a goodly
match?

Feria. Don Carlos, Madam, is but
twelve years old.

Elizabeth. Ay, tell the King that
I will muse upon it;

He is my good friend, and I would
keep him so;

But—he would have me Catholic of
Rome,

And that I scarce can be; and, sir,
till now

My sister's marriage, and my father's
marriages,

Make me full fain to live and die a
maid.

But I am much beholden to your
King.

Have you aught else to tell me?

Feria. Nothing, Madam,
Save that methought I gathered from
the Queen

That she would see your Grace before
she—died.

Elizabeth. God's death! and where-
fore spake you not before?

We dally with our lazy moments
here,
And hers are number'd. Horses
there, without!
I am much beholden to the King,
your master.
Why did you keep me prating?
Horses, there!

[Exit Elizabeth, etc.

Feria. So from a clear sky falls
the thunderbolt!

Don Carlos? Madam, if you marry
Philip,

Then I and he will snaffle your 'God's
death.'

And break your paces in, and make
you tame;

God's death, forsooth—you do not
know King Philip. [Exit.

SCENE IV.—LONDON. BEFORE
THE PALACE.

*A light burning within. Voices of
the night passing.*

First. Is not yon light in the
Queen's chamber?

Second. Ay,

They say she's dying.

First. So is Cardinal Pole.

May the great angels join their wings,
and make

Down for their heads to heaven!

Second. Amen. Come on.
[Exit.

TWO OTHERS.

First. There's the Queen's light.
I hear she cannot live.

Second. God curse her and her
Legate! Gardiner burns

Already; but to pay them full in
kind,

The hottest hold in all the devil's
den

Were but a sort of winter; sir, in
Guernsey,

I watch'd a woman burn; and in her
agony

The mother came upon her—a child
was born—

And, sir, they hurl'd it back into the
fire,

That, being but baptized in fire, the
babe

Might be in fire forever. Ah, good
neighbor,

There should be something fierier
than fire

To yield them their deserts.

First. Amen to all
Your wish, and further.

A Third Voice. Deserts! Amen
to what? Whose deserts? Yours?
You have a gold ring on your fin-
ger, and soft raiment about your
body; and is not the woman up yon-
der sleeping after all she has done, in
peace and quietness, on a soft bed, in
a closed room, with light, fire, physic,
tendence; and I have seen the true
men of Christ lying famine-dead by
scores, and under no ceiling but the
cloud that wept on them, not for
them.

First. Friend, tho' so late, it is not
safe to preach.

You had best go home. What are
you?

Third. What am I? One who
cries continually with sweat and tears
to the Lord God that it would please
Him out of His infinite love to break
down all kingship and queenship, all
priesthood and prelacy; to cancel and
abolish all bonds of human allegiance,
all the magistracy, all the nobles,
and all the wealthy; and to send us
again, according to His promise, the
one King, the Christ, and all things in
common, as in the day of the first
church, when Christ Jesus was
King.

First. If ever I heard a madman,
—let's away!

Why, you long-winded— Sir, you
go beyond me.

I pride myself on being moderate.

Good night! Go home. Besides, you
curse so loud.

The watch will hear you. Get you
home at once. [Exit.

SCENE V.—LONDON. A ROOM IN THE PALACE.

A Gallery on one side. The moonlight streaming through a range of windows on the wall opposite. MARY, LADY CLARENCE, LADY MAGDALEN DACRES, ALICE. QUEEN pacing the Gallery. A writing-table in front. QUEEN comes to the table and writes and goes again, pacing the Gallery.

Lady Clarence. Mine eyes are dim :
what hath she written ? read.

Alice. 'I am dying, Philip ; come to me.'

Lady Magdalen. There—up and down, poor lady, up and down.

Alice. And how her shadow crosses one by one
The moonlight casements pattern'd on the wall,
Following her like her sorrow. She turns again.

[Queen sits and writes, and goes again.]

Lady Clarence. What hath she written now ?

Alice. Nothing ; but 'come, come, come,' and all awry,
And blotted by her tears. This cannot last. *[Queen returns.]*

Mary. I whistle to the bird has broken cage,
And all in vain. *[Sitting down.]*

Calais gone—Guines gone, too—and Philip gone !

Lady Clarence. Dear Madam,
Philip is but at the wars ;
I cannot doubt but that he comes again ;

And he is with you in a measure still.
I never look'd upon so fair a likeness
As your great King in armor there,
his hand

Upon his helmet.

[Pointing to the portrait of Philip on the wall.]

Mary. Duth he not look noble ?
I had heard of him in battle over seas,

And I would have my warrior all in arms.

He said it was not courtly to stand helmeted
Before the Queen. He had his gracious moment,
Altho' you'll not believe me. How he smiles

As if he loved me yet !

Lady Clarence. And so he does.

Mary. He never loved me—nay, he could not love me.

It was his father's policy against France.

I am eleven years older than he,
Poor boy ! *[Weeps.]*

Alice. That was a lusty boy of twenty-seven ; *[Aside.]*

Poor enough in God's grace ?

Mary. —And all in vain !

The Queen of Scots is married to the Dauphin,

And Charles, the lord of this low world, is gone ;

And all his wars and wisdoms past away ;

And in a moment I shall follow him.

Lady Clarence. Nay, dearest Lady, see your good physician.

Mary. Drugs—but he knows they cannot help me—says

That rest is all—tells me I must not think—

That I must rest—I shall rest by and by.

Catch the wild cat, cage him, and when he springs

And maims himself against the bars, say 'rest' :

Why, you must kill him if you would have him rest—

Dead or alive you cannot make him happy.

Lady Clarence. Your Majesty has lived so pure a life,

And done such mighty things by Holy Church,

I trust that God will make you happy yet.

Mary. What is the strange thing happiness ? Sit down here :

Tell me thine happiest hour.

Lady Clarence. I will, if that May make your Grace forget yourself a little.

There runs a shallow brook across
our field
For twenty miles, where the black
crow flies five,
And doth so bound and babble all
the way
As if itself were happy. It was May-
time,
And I was walking with the man I
loved.
I loved him, but I thought I was not
loved.
And both were silent, letting the wild
brook
Speak for us—till he stoop'd and
gather'd one
From out a bed of thick forget-me-
nots,
Look'd hard and sweet at me, and
gave it me.
I took it, tho' I did not know I took
it,
And put it in my bosom, and all at
once
I felt his arms about me, and his
lips—

Mary. O God! I have been too
salck, too slack;
There are Hot Gospellers even among
our guards—
Nobles we dared not touch. We
have but burnt
The heretic priest, workmen, and
women and children.
Wet, famine, ague, fever, storm, wreck,
wrath,—
We have so play'd the coward; but
by God's grace,
We'll follow Philip's leading, and set
up
The Holy Office here—garner the
wheat,
And burn the tares with unquench-
able fire!
Burn!
Fie, what a savor! tell the cooks to
close
The doors of all the offices below.
Latimer!
Sit, we are private with our women
here—
Ever a rough, blunt, and uncourtly
fellow—

Thou light a torch that never will go
out!
'Tis out—mine flames. Women, the
Holy Father
Has ta'en the legateship from our
cousin Pole—
Was that well done? and poor Pole
pines of it,
As I do, to the death. I am but a
woman,
I have no power.—Ah, weak and
meek old man,
Seven-fold dishonor'd even in the
sight
Of thine own sectaries—No, no. No
pardon!
Why that was false: there is the right
hand still
Beckons me hence.
Sir, you were burnt for heresy, not
for treason.
Remember that! 'twas I and Bonner
did it,
And Pole; we are three to one—
Have you found mercy there,
Grant it me here: and see, he smiles
and goes,
Gentle as in life.

Alice. Madam, who goes? King
Philip?

Mary. No, Philip comes and goes,
but never goes.
Women, when I am dead,
Open my heart, and there you will
find written
Two names, Philip and Calais; open
his,—
So that he have one,—
You will find Philip only, policy,
policy,—
Ay, worse than that—not one hour
true to me!
Foul maggots crawling in a fester'd
vice!
Adulterous to the very heart of
Hell.

Hast thou a knife?

Alice. Ay, Madam, but o' God's
mercy—

Mary. Fool, think'st thou I would
peril mine own soul
By slaughter of the body? I could
not, girl,

Not this way—callous with a constant stripe,
Unwoundable. The knife!

Alice. Take heed, take heed!
The blade is keen as death.

Mary. This Philip shall not
Stare in upon me in my haggard-
ness;

Old, miserable, diseased,
Incapable of children. Come thou
down.

[*Cuts out the picture and throws it down.*]

Lie there. (*Wails*) O God, I have
kill'd my Philip!

Alice. No,
Madam, you have but cut the canvas
out;

We can replace it.

Mary. All is well then; rest—
I will to rest; he said, I must have
rest.

[*Cries of 'Elizabeth' in the street.*
A cry! What's that? Elizabeth? re-
volt?

A new Northumberland, another
Wyatt?

I'll fight it on the threshold of the
grave.

Lady Clarence. Madam, your royal
sister comes to see you.

Mary. I will not see her.
Who knows if Boleyn's daughter be
my sister?

I will see none except the priest.
Your arm.

[*To Lady Clarence.*
O Saint of Aragon, with that sweet
worn smile

Among thy patient wrinkles—Help
me hence. [*Exeunt.*]

*The PRIEST passes. Enter ELIZA-
BETH and SIR WILLIAM CECIL.*

Elizabeth. Good counsel yours—
No one in waiting? still,
As if the chamberlain were Death
himself!

The room she sleeps in—is not this
the way?

No, that way there are voices. Am I
too late?

Cecil . . . God guide me lest I lose
the way. [*Exit Elizabeth.*]

Cecil. Many points weather'd,
many perilous ones,
At last a harbor opens; but there-
in

Sunk rocks—they need fine steering
—much it is

To be nor mad, nor bigot—have a
mind—

Nor let Priests' talk, or dream of
worlds to be,

Miscolor things about her—sudden
touches

For him, or him—sunk rocks; no
passionate faith—

But—if let be—balance and compro-
mise;

Brave, wary, sane to the heart of her
—a Tudor

School'd by the shadow of death—a
Boleyn, too,

Glancing across the Tudor—not so
well.

Enter ALICE.

How is the good Queen now?

Alice. Away from Philip.
Back in her childhood—prattling to
her mother

Of her betrothal to the Emperor
Charles,

And childlike-jealous of him again—
and once

She thank'd her father sweetly for his
book

Against that godless German. Ah,
those days

Were happy. It was never merry
world

In England, since the Bible came
among us.

Cecil. And who says that?

Alice. It is a saying among the
Catholics.

Cecil. It never will be merry world
in England,

Till all men have their Bible, rich and
poor.

Alice. The Queen is dying, or you
dare not say it.

Enter ELIZABETH.

Elizabeth. The Queen is dead.

Cecil. Then here she stands! my homage.

Elizabeth. She knew me, and acknowledged me her heir,
Pray'd me to pay her debts, and keep the Faith;
Then claspt the cross, and pass'd away in peace.

I left her lying still and beautiful,
More beautiful than in life. Why would you vex yourself,
Poor sister? Sir, I swear I have no heart

To be your Queen. To reign is restless fence,
Tierce, quart, and trickery. Peace is with the dead.

Her life was winter, for her spring was nipt:

And she loved much: pray God she be forgiven.

Cecil. Peace with the dead, who never were at peace!

Yet she loved one so much—I needs must say—

That never English monarch dying left

England so little.

Elizabeth. But with Cecil's aid
And others, if our person be secured

From traitor stabs—we will make England great.

Enter PAGET, and other LORDS OF THE COUNCIL, SIR RALPH BAGENHALL, etc.

Lords. God save Elizabeth, the Queen of England!

Bagenhall. God save the Crown! the Papacy is no more.

Paget (aside). Are we so sure of that?

Acclamation. God save the Queen!

HAROLD:

A DRAMA.

TO HIS EXCELLENCY
THE RIGHT HON. LORD LYTTON,

Viceroy and Governor-General of India.

MY DEAR LORD LYTTON.—After old-world records—such as the Bayeux tapestry and the Roman de Rou,—Edward Freeman's History of the Norman Conquest, and your father's Historical Romance treating of the same times, have been mainly helpful to me in writing this Drama. Your father dedicated his 'Harold' to my father's brother; allow me to dedicate my 'Harold' to yourself.

A. TENNYSON.

SHOW-DAY AT BATTLE ABBEY, 1876.

A GARDEN here—May breath and bloom of spring—
The cuckoo yonder from an English elm
Crying 'with my false egg I overwhelm
The native nest;' and fancy hears the ring
Of harness, and that deathful arrow sing,
And Saxon battleaxe clang on Norman helm.
Here rose the dragon-banner of our realm:
Here fought, here fell, our Norman-slander'd king.
O Garden blossoming out of English blood!
O strange hate-healer Time! We stroll and stare
Where might made right eight hundred years ago;
Might, right? ay good, so all things make for good—
But he and he, if soul be soul, are where
Each stands full face with all he did below.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

KING EDWARD THE CONFESSOR.

STIGAND, *created Archbishop of Canterbury by the Antipope Benedict.*

ALDRED, *Archbishop of York.*

THE NORMAN BISHOP OF LONDON.

HAROLD, *Earl of Wessex, afterwards King of England*

TOSTIG, *Earl of Northumbria*

GURTH, *Earl of East Anglia*

LEOFWIN, *Earl of Kent and Essex*

WULFNOTH

COUNT WILLIAM OF NORMANDY.

WILLIAM MALET, *a Norman Noble.*¹

EDWIN, *Earl of Mercia*

MORCAR, *Earl of Northumbria after Tostig*

GAMEL, *a Northumbrian Thane.*

ROLF, *a Ponthieu Fisherman.*

OSGOD and ATHELRIC, *Canons from Waltham.*

THE QUEEN, *Edward the Confessor's Wife, Daughter of Godwin.*

ALDWYTH, *Daughter of Alfgar and Widow of Griffyth, King of Wales.*

EDITH, *Ward of King Edward.*

Courtiers, Earls and Thanes, Men-at-Arms, Canons of Waltham, Fishermen, etc.

¹ . . . quidam partim Normannus et Anglus
Compater Herald. (*Gay of Amiens*, 587.)

"SHE, AND WITH HER THE RACE OF ATLANTIS, PAST."—*Page 158.*





A harm to England?

Stigand. Ask it of King Edward!
And he may tell thee, *I* am a harm to
England.

Old uncanonical Stigand—ask of *me*
Who had my pallium from an Anti-
pope!

Not he the man—for in our windy
world

What's up is faith, what's down is
heresy.

Our friends, the Normans, help to
shake his chair.

I have a Norman fever on me, son,
And cannot answer sanely . . .

What it means?

Ask our broad Earl.

[*Pointing to HAROLD, who enters.*

Harold (seeing Gamel). Hail,

Gamel, son of Orm!

Albeit no rolling stone, my good
friend Gamel,

Thou hast rounded since we met.
Thy life at home

Is easier than mine here. Look!
am I not

Work-wan, flesh-fallen?

Gamel. Art thou sick, good Earl?

Harold. Sick as an autumn swal-
low for a voyage,

Sick for an idle week of hawk and
hound

Beyond the seas—a change! When
camest thou hither?

Gamel. To-day, good Earl.

Harold. Is the North quiet,
Gamel?

Gamel. Nay, there be marmars,
for thy brother breaks us

With over-taxing—quiet, ay, as yet—
Nothing as yet.

Harold. Stand by him, mine old
friend,

Thou art a great voice in Northum-
berland!

Advise him: speak him sweetly, he
will hear thee.

He is passionate but honest. Stand
thou by him!

More talk of this to-morrow, if you
weird sign

Not blast us in our dreams.—Well,
father Stigand—

[*To Stigand, who advances to him.*

Stigand (pointing to the comet).
War there, my son? is that the
doom of England?

Harold. Why not the doom of all
the world as well?

For all the world sees it as well as
England.

These meteors came and went before
our day,

Not harming any: it threatens us no
more

Than French or Norman. War? the
worst that follows

Things that seem jerk'd out of the
common rut

Of Nature is the hot religious fool,
Who, seeing war in heaven, for

heaven's credit
Makes it on earth: but look, where

Edward draws
A faint foot hither, leaning upon Tos-
tig.

He hath learnt to love our *Tostig
much of late.

Leofwin. And *he* hath learnt, de-
spite the tiger in him,

To sleek and supple himself to the
king's hand.

Gurth. I trust the kingly touch
that cures the evil

May serve to charm the tiger out of
him.

Leofwin. He hath as much of cat
as tiger in him.

Our Tostig loves the hand and not
the man.

Harold. Nay! Better die than
lie!

Enter KING, QUEEN, and TOSTIG.

Edward. In heaven signs!
Signs upon earth! signs everywhere!
your Priests

Gross, worldly, simoniacal, unlearn'd!
They scarce can read their Psalter;
and your churches

Uncouth, unhandsome, while in Nor-
manland

God speaks thro' abler voices, as He
dwells

In statelier shrines. I say not this, as
being

Half Norman-blooded, nor as some
have held,
Because I love the Norman better—
no,
But dreading God's revenge upon this
realm
For narrowness and coldness : and I
say it
For the last time perchance, before I
go
To find the sweet refreshment of the
Saints.

I have lived a life of utter purity :
I have baided the great church of
Holy Peter :
I have wrought miracles—to God the
glory—
And miracles will in my name be
wrought

Hereafter.—I have fought the fight
and go—

I see the flashing of the gates of
pearl—

And it is well with me, tho' some of
you

Have scorn'd me—ay—but after I am
gone

Woe, woe to England ! I have had a
vision ;

The seven sleepers in the cave at
Ephesus

Have turn'd from right to left.

Harold. My most dear Master,
What matters ? let them turn from
left to right

And sleep again.

Tostig. Too hardy with thy king !
A life of prayer and fasting well may
see

Deeper into the mysteries of heaven
Than thou, good brother.

Aldwyth (aside). Sees he into thine,
That thou wouldst have his promise
for the crown ?

Edward. *Tostig* says true ; my
son, thou art too hard,
Not stagger'd by this ominous earth
and heaven :

But heaven and earth are threads of
the same loom,
Play into one another, and weave the
web

That may confound thee yet.

Harold. Nay, I trust not,
For I have served thee long and
honestly.

Edward. I know it, son ; I am not
thankless : thou
Hast broken all my foes, lighten'd for
me

The weight of this poor crown, and
left me time

And peace for prayer to gain a better
one.

Twelve years of service ! England
loves thee for it.

Thou art the man to rule her !

Aldwyth (aside). So, not *Tostig* !

Harold. And after those twelve
years a boon, my king,

Respite, a holiday : thyself wast wont
To love the chase : thy leave to set
my feet

On board, and hunt and hawk beyond
the seas !

Edward. What with this flaming
horror overhead ?

Harold. Well, when it passes then.

Edward. Ay if it pass.

Go not to Normandy—go not to Nor-
mandy.

Harold. And wherefore not, my
king, to Normandy ?

Is not my brother Wulfnoth hostage
there

For my dead father's loyalty to thee ?
I pray thee, let me hence and bring
him home.

Edward. Not thee, my son : some
other messenger.

Harold. And why not me, my
lord, to Normandy ?

Is not the Norman Count thy friend
and mine ?

Edward. I pray thee, do not go to
Normandy.

Harold. Because my father drove
the Normans out

Of England ?—That was many a sum-
mer gone—

Forgotten and forgiven by them and
thee.

Edward. *Harold*, I will not yield
thee leave to go.

Harold. Why then to Flanders.
I will hawk and hunt

In Flanders.

Edward. Be there not fair woods
and fields
In England? Wilful, wilful. Go—
the Saints
Pilot and prosper all thy wandering
out
And homeward. Tostig, I am faint
again.

Son Harold, I will in and pray for
thee.

[*Exit, leaning on Tostig, and
followed by Stigand, Morcar,
and Courtiers.*

Harold. What lies upon the mind
of our good king
That he should harp this way on Nor-
mandy?

Queen. Brother, the king is wiser
than he seems;
And Tostig knows it; Tostig loves
the king.

Harold. And love should know;
and—be the king so wise,—
Then Tostig too were wiser than he
seems.

I love the man but not his phantasies.

(*Re-enter TOSTIG.*)

Well, brother,
When didst thou hear from thy North-
umbria?

Tostig. When did I hear aught but
this 'When' from thee?
Leave me alone, brother, with my
Northumbria:

She is my mistress, let me look to
her!

The king hath made me Earl; make
me not fool!

Nor make the King a fool, who made
me Earl!

Harold. No, Tostig—lest I make
myself a fool
Who made the King who made thee,
make thee Earl.

Tostig. Why chafe me then?
Thou knowest I soon go wild.

Garth. Come, come! as yet thou
art not gone so wild

But thou canst hear the best and
wisest of us.

Harold. So says old Gurth, not I:
yet hear! thine earldom,
Tostig, hath been a kingdom. Their
old crown

Is yet a force among them, a sun set
But leaving light enough for Alfgar's
house

To strike thee down by—nay, this
ghastly glare
May heat their fancies.

Tostig. My most worthy brother,
Thou art the quietest man in all the
world—

Ay, ay and wise in peace and great in
war—

Pray God the people choose thee for
their king!

But all the powers of the house of
Godwin

Are not enframed in thee.

Harold. Thank the Saints, no!
But thou hast drain'd them shallow by
thy tolls,

And thou art ever here about the
King:

Thine absence well may seem a want
of care.

Cling to their love; for, now the sons
of Godwin

Sit topmost in the field of England,
envy,

Like the rough bear beneath the tree,
good brother,

Waits till the man let go.

Tostig. Good counsel truly!
I heard from my Northumbria yester-
day.

Harold. How goes it then with
thy Northumbria? Well?

Tostig. And wouldst thou that it
went aught else than well?

Harold. I would it went as well as
with mine earldom,

Leofwin's and Garth's.

Tostig. Ye govern milder men.

Garth. We have made them
milder by just government.

Tostig. Ay, ever give yourselves
your own good word.

Leofwin. An honest gift, by all the
Saints, if giver

And taker be but honest: but they
bribe

Each other, and so often, an honest world
Will not believe them.

Harold. I may tell thee, Tostig,
I heard from thy Northumberland to-day.

Tostig. From spies of thine to spy my nakedness
In my poor North!

Harold. There is a movement there,
A blind one—nothing yet.

Tostig. Crush it at once
With all the power I have!—I must
—I will!—

Crush it half-born! Fool still? or wisdom there,
My wise head-shaking Harold?

Harold. Make not thou
The nothing something. Wisdom
when in power

And wisest, should not frown as
Power, but smile

As kindness, watching all, till the true
must

Shall make her strike as Power: but
when to strike—

O Tostig, O dear brother—If they
prance,

Rein in, not lash them, lest they rear
and run

And break both neck and axle.

Tostig. Good again!
Good counsel tho' scarce needed.
Pour not water

In the full vessel running out at
top

To swamp the house.

Leofwin. Nor thou be a wild thing
Out of the waste, to turn and bite the
hand

Would help thee from the trap.

Tostig. Thou playest in tune.

Leofwin. To the deaf adder thee,
that wilt not dance

However wisely charin'd.

Tostig. No more, no more!

Gurth. I likewise cry 'no more.'
Unwholesome talk

For Godwin's house! Leofwin, thou
hast a tongue!

Tostig, thou look'st as thou wouldst
spring upon him.

St. Olaf, not while I am by!—Come,
come,

Join hands, let brethren dwell in unity;
Let kith and kin stand close as our
shield-wall,

Who breaks us then? I say, thou
hast a tongue,

And Tostig is not stout enough to
bear it.

Vex him not, Leofwin.

Tostig. No, I am not vext,—
Altho' ye seek to vex me, one and all.
I have to make report of my good
earldom

To the good king who gave it—not to
you—

Not any of you.—I am not vext at all.

Harold. The king? the king is
ever at his prayers;

In all that handles matter of the state
I am the king.

Tostig. That shalt thou never be
If I can thwart thee.

Harold. Brother, brother!

Tostig. Away!

[Exit Tostig.]

Queen. Spite of this grisly star ye
three must gall

Poor Tostig.

Leofwin. Tostig, sister, galls him-
self;

He cannot smell a rose but pricks his
nose

Against the thorn, and rails against
the rose.

Queen. I am the only rose of all
the stock

That never thorn'd him; Edward
loves him, so

Ye hate him. Harold always hated
him.

Why—how they fought when boys—
and, Holy Mary!

How Harold used to beat him!

Harold. Why, boys will fight.
Leofwin would often fight me, and I
beat him.

Even old Gurth would fight. I had
much ado

To hold mine own against old Gurth.
Old Gurth,

We fought like great states for grave
cause; but Tostig—

On a sudden—at a something—for a nothing—
 The boy would fust me hard, and when we fought
 I conquer'd, and he loved me none the less,
 Till thou wouldst get him all apart, and tell him
 That where he was but worsted, he was wrong'd.
 Ah! thou hast taught the king to spoil him too;
 Now the spoilt child sways both.
 Take heed, take heed;
 Thou art the Queen; ye are boy and girl no more:
 Side not with Tostig in any violence,
 Lest thou be sideways guilty of the violence.

Queen. Come fall not foul on me.
 I leave thee, brother.

Harold. Nay, my good sister—

[*Exeunt Queen, Harold, Gurth, and Leofwin.*]

Aldwyth. Gamel, son of Orm,
 What thinkest thou this means?

[*Pointing to the comet.*]

Gamel. War, my dear lady,
 War, waste, plague, famine, all malignities.

Aldwyth. It means the fall of
 Tostig from his earldom.

Gamel. That were too small a
 matter for a comet!

Aldwyth. It means the lifting of
 the house of Alfgar.

Gamel. Too small! a comet would
 not show for that!

Aldwyth. Not small for thee, if
 thou canst compass it.

Gamel. Thy love?

Aldwyth. As much as I can give
 thee, man;
 This Tostig is, or like to be, a
 tyrant;

Stir up thy people: oust him!

Gamel. And thy love?

Aldwyth. As much as thou canst
 bear.

Gamel. I can bear all,
 And not be giddy.

Aldwyth. No more now: to-
 morrow.

SCENE II.—IN THE GARDEN. THE
 KING'S HOUSE NEAR LONDON.
 SUNSET.

Edith. Mad for thy mate, passion-
 ate nightingale . . .

I love thee for it—ay, but stay a
 moment;

He can but stay a moment: he is
 going.

I fain would hear him coming! . . .
 near me . . . near,

Somewhere—To draw him nearer with
 a charm

Like thine to thine.

[*Singing.*]

Love is come with a song and a smile,
 Welcome Love with a smile and a

song:

Love can stay but a little while.

Why cannot he stay? They call him
 away:

Ye do him wrong, ye do him wrong;
 Love will stay for a whole life long.

Enter HAROLD.

Harold. The nightingales in
 Haveringatte-Bower

Sang out their loves so loud, that
 Edward's prayers

Were deafen'd and he pray'd them
 dumb, and thus

I dumb thee too, my wingless nightin-
 gale! [*Kissing her.*]

Edith. Thou art my music!

Would their wings were mine
 To follow thee to Flanders! Must
 thou go?

Harold. Not must, but will. It is
 but for one moon.

Edith. Leaving so many foes in
 Edward's hall

To league against thy weal. The
 Lady Aldwyth

Was here to-day, and when she
 touch'd on thee,

She stammer'd in her hate; I am sure
 she hates thee,

Pants for thy blood.

Harold. Well, I have given her
 cause—

I fear no woman.

Edith. Hate not one who felt
Some pity for thy hater! I am sure
Her morning wanted sunlight, she so
praised

The convent and lone life—within the
pale—

Beyond the passion. Nay—she held
with Edward,

At least methought she held with holy
Edward,

That marriage was half sin.

Harold. A lesson worth
Finger and thumb—thus (*snaps his
fingers*). And my answer to
it—

See here—an interwoven H and E!

Take thou this ring; I will demand
his ward

From Edward when I come again.

Ay, would she?

She to shut up my blossom in the
dark!

Thou art my nun, thy cloister in mine
arms.

Edith (taking the ring). Yea, but
Earl Tostig—

Harold. That's a truer fear!
For if the North take fire, I should be
back;

I shall be, soon enough.

Edith. Ay, but last night
An evil dream that ever came and
went—

Harold. A gnat that vexed thy
pillow! Had I been by,

I would have spoil'd his horn. My
girl, what was it?

Edith. Oh! that thou wert not go-
ing!

For so methought it was our mar-
riage-morn,

And while we stood together, a dead
man

Rose from behind the altar, tore
away

My marriage ring, and rent my bridal
veil;

And then I turn'd, and saw the church
all fill'd

With dead men upright from their
graves, and all

The dead men made at thee to mur-
der thee,

But thou didst back thyself against a
pillar,
And strike among them with thy
battle-axe—

There, what a dream!

Harold. Well, well—a dream—
no more!

Edith. Did not Heaven speak to
men in dreams of old?

Harold. Ay—well—of old. I tell
thee what, my child;

Thou hast misread this merry dream
of thine,

Taken the rifted pillars of the wood
For smooth stone columns of the

sanctuary,
The shadows of a hundred fat dead
deer

For dead men's ghosts. True, that
the battle-axe

Was out of place; it should have
been the bow—

Come, thou shalt dream no more such
dreams; I swear it,

By mine own eyes—and these two
sapphires—these

Twin rubies, that are amulets against
all

The kisses of all kind of womankind
In Flanders, till the sea shall roll me

back
To tumble at thy feet.

Edith. That would but shame
me,

Rather than make me vain. The sea
may roll

Sand, shingle, shore-weed, not the
living rock

Which guards the land.

Harold. Except it be a soft one,
And undereaten to the fall. Mine
amulet . . .

This last . . . upon thine eyelids, to
shut in

A happier dream. Sleep, sleep, and
thou shalt see

My grayhounds fleeting like a beam of
light,

And hear my peregrine and her bells
in heaven;

And other bells on earth, which yet
are heaven's;

Guess what they be.

Edith. He cannot guess who knows.
Farewell, my king.
Harold. Not yet, but then—my queen. [*Exeunt.*]

Enter ALDWYTH from the thicket.

Aldwyth. The kiss that charms
thine eyelids into sleep,
Will hold mine waking. Hate him?
I could love him
More, tenfold, than this fearful child
can do;
Griffyth I hated: why not hate the foe
Of England? Griffyth when I saw
him flee,
Chased deer-like up his mountains, all
the blood
That should have only pulsed for
Griffyth, beat
For his pursuer. I love him or think
I love him.
If he were King of England, I his
queen,
I might be sure of it. Nay, I do love
him.—
She must be cloister'd somehow, lest
the king
Should yield his ward to Harold's
will. What harm?
She hath but blood enough to live,
not love.—
When Harold goes and Tostig, shall
I play
The craftier Tostig with him? fawn
upon him?
Chime in with all? 'O thou more
saint than king!'
And that were true enough. 'O
blessed relics!'
'O Holy Peter!' If he found me
thus,
Harold might hate me; he is broad
and honest,
Breathing an easy gladness . . . not
like Aldwyth . . .
For which I strangely love him.
Should not England
Love Aldwyth, if she stay the feuds
that part
The sons of Godwin from the sons of
Alfgar

By such a marrying? Courage, noble
Aldwyth!
Let all thy people bless thee!
Our wild Tostig,
Edward hath made him Earl: he
would be king:—
The dog that snapt the shadow, dropt
the bone.—
I trust he may do well, this Gamel,
whom
I play upon, that he may play the
note
Whereat the dog shall howl and run,
and Harold
Hear the king's music, all alone with
him,
Pronounced his heir of England.
I see the goal and half the way to
it.—
Peace-lover is our Harold for the
sake
Of England's wholeness—so—to
shake the North
With earthquake and disruption—
some division—
Then fling mine own fair person in
the gap
A sacrifice to Harold, a peace-offering,
A scape-goat marriage—all the sins
of both
The houses on mine head—then a
fair life
And bless the Queen of England.
Morcar (coming from the thicket).
Art thou assured
By this, that Harold loves but Edith?
Aldwyth. Morcar!
Why creep'st thou like a timorous
beast of prey
Out of the bush by night?
Morcar. I follow'd thee.
Aldwyth. Follow my lead, and I
will make thee earl.
Morcar. What lead then?
Aldwyth. Thou shalt flash it secretly
Among the good Northumbrian folk,
that I—
That Harold loves me—yea, and
presently
That I and Harold are betroth'd—
and last—

Perchance that Harold wrongs me ;
tho' I would not

That it should come to that.

Morcar. I will both flash
And thunder for thee.

Aldwyth. I said 'secretly ;'
It is the flash that murders, the poor
thunder
Never harm'd head.

Morcar. But thunder may bring
down

That which the flash hath stricken.

Aldwyth. Down with Tostig !
That first of all.—And when doth
Harold go ?

Morcar. To-morrow—first to Bo-
sham, then to Flanders.

Aldwyth. Not to come back till
Tostig shall have shown
And redden'd with his people's blood
the teeth

That shall be broken by us—yea, and
thou

Chair'd in his place. Good-night, and
dream thyself

Their chosen Earl. [*Exit Aldwyth.*]

Morcar. Earl first, and after that
Who knows I may not dream myself
their king !

ACT II.

SCENE I.—SEASHORE. PONTIEU.
NIGHT.

HAROLD and his Men, wrecked.

Harold. Friends, in that last in-
hospitable plunge
Our boat hath burst her ribs ; but
ours are whole ;

I have but bark'd my hands.

Attendant. I dug mine into
My old fast friend the shore, and
clinging thus

Felt the remorseless outdraught of
the deep

Haul like a great strong fellow at my
legs.

And then I rose and ran. The blast
that came

So suddenly hath fallen as suddenly—

Put thou the comet and this blast
together—

Harold. Put thou thyself and
mother-wit together.

Be not a fool !

(*Enter Fishermen with torches, HAR-
OLD going up to one of them, ROLF.*)

Wicked sea-will-o'-the-wisp !
Wolf of the shore ! dog, with thy
lying lights
Thou hast betray'd us on these rocks
of thine !

Rolf. Ay, but thou liest as loud
as the black herring-pond behind
thee. We be fishermen ; I came to
see after my nets.

Harold. To drag us into them.
Fishermen ? devils !

Who, while ye fish for men with your
false fires,

Let the great Devil fish for your own
souls.

Rolf. Nay then, we be liker the
blessed Apostles ; they were fishers of
men, Father Jean says.

Harold. I had liefer that the fish
had swallowed me.
Like Jonah, than have known there
were such devils.

What's to be done ?

[*To his Men—goes apart with them.*]

Fisherman. Rolf, what fish did
swallow Jonah ?

Rolf. A whale !

Fisherman. Then a whale to a
whelk we have swallowed the King of
England. I saw him over there.
Look thee, Rolf, when I was down in
the fever, she was down with the hun-
ger, and thou didst stand by her and
give her thy crabs, and set her up
again, till now, by the patient Saints,
she's as crabb'd as ever.

Rolf. And I'll give her my crabs
again, when thou art down again.

Fisherman. I thank thee, Rolf.
Run thou to Count Guy ; he is hard
at hand. Tell him what hath crept
into our creel, and he will fee thee as
freely as he will wrench this outland-
er's ransom out of him—and why not ?

for what right had he to get himself wrecked on another man's land?

Rolf. Thou art the human-hearted-est,
Christian-charitiest of all crab-catch-ers.

Share and share alike! [*Exit.*

Harold (to Fisherman). Fellow,
dost thou catch crabs?

Fisherman. As few as I may in a wind, and less than I would in a calm.
Ay!

Harold. I have a mind that thou shalt catch no more.

Fisherman. How?

Harold. I have a mind to brain thee with mine axe.

Fisherman. Ay, do, do, and our great Count-crab will make his nippers meet in thine heart; he'll sweat it out of thee, he'll sweat it out of thee. Look, he's here! He'll speak for himself! Hold thine own, if thou canst!

Enter GUY, COUNT OF PONTIEU.

Harold. Guy, Count of Ponthieu?

Guy. Harold, Earl of Wessex!

Harold. Thy villians with their lying lights have wreck'd us!

Guy. Art thou not Earl of Wessex?

Harold. In mine earldom
A man may hang gold bracelets on a bush,
And leave them for a year, and coming back
Find them again.

Guy. Thou art a mighty man
In thine own earldom!

Harold. Were such murderous liars

In Wessex—if I caught them, they should hang

Cliff-gibbeted for sea-marks; our sea-mew

Winging their only wail!

Guy. Ay, but my men
Hold that the shipwreckt are accursed of God;—

What hinders me to hold with mine own men?

Harold. The Christian manhood of the man who reigns!

Guy. Ay, rave thy worst, but in our oubliettes
Thou shalt or rot or ransom. Hale him hence! [*To one of his Attendants.*

Fly thou to William; tell him we have Harold.

SCENE II.—BAYEUX. PALACE.

COUNT WILLIAM and WILLIAM MALET.

William. We hold, our Saxon woodcock in the spring,
But he begins to flutter. As I think

He was thine host in England when I went

To visit Edward.

Malet. Yea, and there, my lord,
To make allowance for their rougher fashions,

I found him all a noble host should be.

William. Thou art his friend:
thou know'st my claim on Eng-land

Thro' Edward's promise: we have him in the toils.

And it were well, if thou shouldst let him feel,

How dense a fold of danger nets him round,

So that he bristle himself against my will.

Malet. What would I do, my lord, if I were you?

William. What wouldst thou do?

Malet. My lord, he is thy guest.

William. Nay, by the splendor of God, no guest of mine.

He came not to see me, had past me by

To hunt and hawk elsewhere, save for the fate

Which hunted him when that un-Saxon blast,

And bolts of thunder moulded in high heaven

To serve the Norman purpose, drave
and crack'd
His boat on Ponthieu beach; where
our friend Guy
Had wrung his ransom from him by
the rack,
But that I stept between and pur-
chased him,
Translating his captivity from Guy
To mine own hearth at Bayeux, where
he sits
My ransom'd prisoner.

Malet. Well, if not with gold,
With golden deeds and iron strokes
that brought
Thy war with Brittany to a goodlier
close
Than else had been, he paid his ran-
som back.

William. So that henceforth they
are not like to league
with Harold against me.

Malet. A marvel, how
He from the liquid sands of Coesnon
Haled thy shore-swallow'd, armor'd
Normans up

To fight for thee again!

William. Perchance against
Their savor, save thou save him from
himself.

Malet. But I should let him home
again, my lord.

William. Simple! let fly the bird
within the hand,
To catch the bird again within the
bush!

No.

Smooth thou my way, before he clash
with me;

I want his voice in England for the
crown,

I want thy voice with him to bring
him round;

And being brave he must be subtly
cow'd,

And being truthful wrought upon to
swear

Vows that he dare not break. Eng-
land our own

Thro' Harold's help, he shall be my
dear friend

As well as thine, and thou thyself
shalt have

Large lordship there of lands and
territory.

Malet. I knew thy purpose; he
and Wulfnoth never
Have met, except in public; shall
they meet

In private? I have often talk'd with
Wulfnoth,

And stuff'd the boy with fears that
these may act

On Harold when they meet.

William. Then let them meet!
Malet. I can but love this noble,
honest Harold.

William. Love him! why not?
thine is a loving office,
I have commission'd thee to save the
man:

Help the good ship, showing the
sunken rock,
Or he is wreckt for ever.

Enter WILLIAM RUFUS.

William Rufus. Father.

William. Well, boy.

William Rufus. They have taken
away the toy thou gavest me,
The Norman knight.

William. Why, boy?

William Rufus. Because I broke
The horse's leg—it was mine own to
break;

I like to have my toys, and break them
too.

William. Well, thou shalt have
another Norman knight!

William Rufus. And may I break
his legs?

William. Yea,—get thee gone!

William Rufus. I'll tell them I
have had my way with thee.

[*Exit.*

Malet. I never knew thee check
thy will for ought
Save for the prattling of thy little
ones.

William. Who shall be kings of
England. I am heir
Of England by the promise of her
king.

Malet. But there the great Assem-
bly choose their king,

The choice of England is the voice of
England.

William. I will be king of England
by the laws,

The choice, and voice of England.

Malet. Can that be?

William. The voice of any people
is the sword

That guards them, or the sword that
beats them down.

Here comes the would-be what I will
be . . . kinglike . . .

Tho' scarce at ease; for, save our
meshes break,

More kinglike he than like to prove a
king.

*(Enter HAROLD, musing, with his eyes
on the ground.)*

He sees me not—and yet he dreams
of me.

Earl, wilt thou fly my falcons this fair
day?

They are of the best, strong-wing'd
against the wind.

*Harold (looking up suddenly, having
caught but the last word).*

Which way does it blow?

William. Blowing for England,
ha?

Not yet. Thou hast not learnt thy
quarters here

The winds so cross and jostle among
these towers.

Harold. Count of the Normans,
thou hast ransom'd us,

Maintain'd, and entertain'd us roy-
ally!

William. And thou for us hast
fought as loyally,

Which binds us friendship-fast for
ever!

Harold. Good!

But lest we turn the scale of courtesy
By too much pressure on it, I would

fain,
Since thou hast promised Wulfnoth

home with us,
Be home again with Wulfnoth.

William. Stay—as yet
Thou hast but seen how Norman

hands can strike,

But walk'd our Norman field, scarce
touch'd or tasted

The splendors of our Court.

Harold. I am in no mood:
I should be as the shadow of a cloud
Crossing your light.

William. Nay, rest a week or two,
And we will fill thee full of Norman

sun,
And send thee back among thine

island mists

With laughter.

Harold. Count, I thank thee, but
had rather

Breathe the free wind from off our
Saxon downs,

Tho' charged with all the wet of all
the west.

William. Why if thou wilt, so let
it be—thou shalt.

That were a graceless hospitality
To chain the free guest to the ban-

quet-board;

To-morrow we will ride with thee to
Harfleur,

And see thee shipt, and pray in thy
behalf

For happier homeward winds than
that which crack'd

Thy bark at Ponthieu,—yet to us, in
faith,

A happy one—whereby we came to
know

Thy valor and thy value, noble
earl.

Ay, and perchance a happy one for
thee,

Provided—I will go with thee to-mor-
row—

Nay—but there be conditions, easy
ones,

So thou, fair friend, will take them
easily.

Enter PAGE.

Page. My lord, there is a post
from over seas

With news for thee. [*Exit Page.*

William. Come, Malet, let us
hear!

[*Exeunt Count William and
Malet.*

Harold. Conditions? What conditions? pay him back
His ransom? 'easy'—that were easy
—*say*—
No money-lover he! What said the King?

'I pray you do not go to Normandy.'
And fate hath blown me hither, bound me too
With bitter obligation to the Count—
Have I not fought it out? What did he mean?
There lodged a gleaming grimness in his eyes,
Gave his shorn smile the lie. The walls oppress me,
And yon huge keep that hinders half the heaven.
Free air! free field!

[*Moves to go out.* A Man-at-arms follows him.]

Harold (to the Man-at-arms). I need thee not. Why dost thou follow me?

Man-at-arms. I have the Count's commands to follow thee.

Harold. What then? Am I in danger in this court?

Man-at-arms. I cannot tell. I have the Count's commands.

Harold. Stand out of earshot then, and keep me still

In eyeshot.

Man-at-arms. Yea, lord Harold.
[*Withdraws.*]

Harold. And arm'd men
Ever keep watch beside my chamber door,
And if I walk within the lonely wood,
There is an arm'd man ever glides behind!

(*Enter MALET.*)

Why am I follow'd, haunted, harass'd,
watch'd?
See yonder!

[*Pointing to the Man-at-arms.*]

Malet. 'Tis the good Count's care for thee!

The Normans love thee not, nor thou the Normans,
Or—so they deem.

Harold. But wherefore is the wind,
Which way soever the vane-arrow swing,
Not ever fair for England? Why but now
He said (thou heardest him) that I must not hence
Save on conditions.

Malet. So in truth he said.

Harold. Malet, thy mother was an Englishwoman;
There somewhere beats an English pulse in thee!

Malet. Well—for my mother's sake I love your England,
But for my father I love Normandy.

Harold. Speak for thy mother's sake, and tell me true.

Malet. Then for my Mother's sake, and England's sake
That suffers in the daily want of thee,
Obey the Count's conditions, my good friend.

Harold. How, Malet, if they be not honorable!

Malet. Seem to obey them.

Harold. Better die than lie!

Malet. Choose therefore whether thou wilt have thy conscience
White as a maiden's hand, or whether England
Be shattered into fragments.

Harold. News from England?

Malet. Morcar and Edwin have stirr'd up the Thanes
Against thy brother Tostig's governance;
And all the North of Humber is one storm.

Harold. I should be there, Malet, I should be there!

Malet. And Tostig in his own hall on suspicion
Hath massacred the Thane that was his guest,
Gamel, the son of Orm: and there be more
As villainously slain.

Harold. The wolf! the beast!
Ill news for guests, ha, Malet!
More? What more?

What do they say? did Edward know of this?

Malet. They say, his wife was knowing and abetting.

Harold. They say, his wife!—To marry and have no husband
Makes the wife fool. My God, I should be there.
I'll hack my way to the sea.

Malet. Thou canst not, Harold;
Our Duke is all between thee and the sea,

Our Duke is all about thee like a God;
All passes block'd. Obey him, speak him fair,

For he is only debonair to those
That follow where he leads, but stark as death

To those that cross him.—Look thou, here is Wulfnoth!

I leave thee to thy talk with him alone;

How wan, poor lad! how sick and sad for home! [*Exit Malet.*]

Harold (*muttering*). Go not to Normandy—go not to Normandy!

(*Enter WULFNOTH.*)

Poor brother! still a hostage!

Wulfnoth. Yea, and I shall see the dewy kiss of dawn no more

Make blush the maiden-white of our tall cliffs,

Nor mark the sea-bird rouse himself and hover

Above the windy ripple, and fill the sky

With free sea-laughter—never—save indeed

Thou canst make yield this iron-mooded Duke

To let me go.

Harold. Why, brother, so he will; But on conditions. Canst thou guess at them?

Wulfnoth. Draw nearer,—I was in the corridor,

I saw him coming with his brother Odo

The Bayeux bishop, and I hid myself.

Harold. They did thee wrong who made thee hostage; thou

Wast ever fearful.

Wulfnoth. And he spoke—I heard him—

'This Harold is not of the royal blood,

Can have no right to the crown,' and Odo said,

'Thine is the right, for thine the might; he is here,

And yonder is thy keep.'

Harold. No, Wulfnoth, no.

Wulfnoth. And William laugh'd and swore that might was right,

Far as he knew in this poor world of ours—

'Marry, the Saints must go along with us,

And, brother, we will find a way,' said he—

Yea, yea, he would be king of England.

Harold. Never!

Wulfnoth. Yea, but thou must not this way answer him.

Harold. Is it not better still to speak the truth?

Wulfnoth. Not here, or thou wilt never hence nor I:

For in the racing toward this golden goal

He turns not right or left, but tramples flat

Whatever thwarts him; hast thou never heard

His savagery at Alençon,—the town Hung out raw hides along their walls, and cried

'Work for the tanner.'

Harold. That had anger'd me Had I been William.

Wulfnoth. Nay, but he had prisoners,

He tore their eyes out, sliced their hands away,

And flung them streaming o'er the battlements

Upon the heads of those who walk'd within—

O speak him fair, Harold, for thine own sake.

Harold. Your Welshman says, 'The Truth against the World,'

Much more the truth against myself.

Wulfnoth. Thyself?

But for my sake, oh brother! oh! for my sake!

Harold. Poor Wulfnoth! do they not entreat thee well?

Wulfnoth. I see the blackness of my dungeon loom

Across their lamps of revel, and beyond

The merriest murmurs of their banquet clank

The shackles that will bind me to the wall.

Harold. Too fearful still!

Wulfnoth. Oh no, no—speak him fair!

Call it to temporize; and not to lie;

Harold. I do not counsel thee to lie. The man that hath to foil a murder-

ous aim

May, surely, play with words.

Harold. Words are the man. Not ev'n for thy sake, brother, would I lie.

Wulfnoth. Then for thine Edith?

Harold. There thou prick'st me deep.

Wulfnoth. And for our Mother England?

Harold. Deeper still.

Wulfnoth. And deeper still the deep down oubliette,

Down thirty feet below the smiling day—

In blackness—dogs' food thrown upon thy head.

And over thee the suns arise and set, And the lark sings, the sweet stars

come and go,

And men are at their markets, in their fields,

And woo their loves and have forgotten thee;

And thou art upright in thy living grave,

Where there is barely room to shift thy side,

And all thine England hath forgotten thee;

And he our lazy-pious Norman King, With all his Normans round him

once again,

Counts his old beads, and hath forgotten thee.

Harold. Thou art of my blood, and so methinks, my boy,

Thy fears infect me beyond reason. Peace!

Wulfnoth. And then our fiery Tostig, while thy hands

Are palsied here, if his Northumbrians rise

And hurl him from them,—I have heard the Normans

Count upon this confusion—may he not make

A league with William, so to bring him back?

Harold. That lies within the shadow of the chance.

Wulfnoth. And like a river in flood thro' a burst dam

Descends the ruthless Norman—our good King

Kneels mumbling some old bone—our helpless folk

Are wash'd away, wailing, in their own blood—

Harold. Wailing! not warring? Boy, thou hast forgotten

That thou art English.

Wulfnoth. Then our modest women—

I know the Norman license—thine own Edith—

Harold. No more! I will not hear thee—William comes.

Wulfnoth. I dare not well be seen in talk with thee.

Make thou not mention that I spake with thee.

[*Moves away to the back of the stage.*]

Enter WILLIAM, MALET, and Officer.

Officer. We have the man that rail'd against thy birth.

William. Tear out his tongue.

Officer. He shall not rail again, He said that he should see confusion fall

On thee and on thine house.

William. Tear out his eyes, And plunge him into prison.

Officer. It shall be done.

[Exit Officer.]

William. Look not amazed, fair earl! Better leave undone Than do by halves—tongueless and eyeless, prison'd—

Harold. Better methinks have slain the man at once!

William. We have respect for man's immortal soul, We seldom take man's life, except in war;

It frights the traitor more to maim and blind.

Harold. In mine own land I should have scorn'd the man, Or lash'd his rascal back, and let him go.

William. And let him go? To slander thee again! Yet in thine own land in thy father's day

They blinded my young kinsman, Alfred—ay, Some said it was thy father's deed.

Harold. They lied.

William. But thou and he—whom at thy word for, thou Art known a speaker of the truth, I free

From this foul charge—

Harold. Nay, nay, he freed himself By oath and compurgation from the charge.

The king, the lords, the people clear'd him of it.

William. But thou and he drove our good Normans out From England, and this rankles in us yet.

Archbishop Robert hardly scaped with life.

Harold. Archbishop Robert! Robert the Archbishop! Robert of Jumièges, he that—

Malet. Quiet! quiet!

Harold. Count! if there sat within the Norman chair

A ruler all for England—one who fill'd

All offices, all bishopricks with English—

We could not move from Dover to the Humber

Saving thro' Norman bishopricks—I say

Ye would applaud that Norman who should drive

The stranger to the fiends!

William. Why, that is reason! Warrior thou art, and mighty wise withal!

Ay, ay, but many among our Norman lords

Hate thee for this, and press upon me—saying

God and the sea have given thee to our hands—

To plunge thee into life-long prison here:—

Yet I hold out against them, as I may,

Yea—would hold out, yea, tho' they should revolt—

For thou hast done the battle in my cause;

I am thy fastest friend in Normandy.

Harold. I am doubly bound to thee . . . if this be so.

William. And I would bind thee more, and would myself

Be bounden to thee more.

Harold. Then let me hence With Wulfnoth to King Edward.

William. So we will. We hear he hath not long to live.

Harold. It may be. *William.* Why then the heir of England, who is he?

Harold. The Atheling is nearest to the throne.

William. But sickly, slight, half-witted and a child,

Will England have him king?

Harold. It may be, no.

William. And hath King Edward not pronounced his heir?

Harold. Not that I know.

William. When he was here in Normandy,

He loved us and we him, because we found him

A Norman of the Normans.

Harold. So did we.

William. A gentle, gracious, pure and saintly man!

And grateful to the hand that shielded
him,
He promised that if ever he were
king
In England, he would give his kingly
voice
To me as his successor. Knowest
thou this?

Harold. I learn it now.

William. Thou knowest I am his
cousin,
And that my wife descends from Al-
fred?

Harold. Ay.

William. Who hath a better claim
then to the crown
So that ye wilt not crown the Athel-
ing?

Harold. None that I know . . . if
that but hung upon
King Edward's will.

William. Wilt thou uphold my
claim?

Malet (aside to Harold). Be careful
of thine answer, my good friend.

Wulfnoth (aside to Harold). Oh!
Harold, for my sake and for
thine own!

Harold. Ay . . . if the king have
not revoked his promise.

William. But hath he done it then?

Harold. Not that I know.

William. Good, good, and thou
wilt help me to the crown?

Harold. Ay . . . if the Witan will
consent to this.

William. Thou art the mightiest
voice in England, man,
Thy voice will lead the Witan—shall
I have it?

Wulfnoth (aside to Harold). Oh!
Harold, if thou love thine
Edith, ay.

Harold. Ay, if—

Malet (aside to Harold). Thine
'ifs' will sear thine eyes out—
ay.

William. I ask thee, wilt thou
help me to the crown?
And I will make thee my great Earl
of Earls,
Foremost in England and in Nor-
mandy;

Thou shalt be verily king—all but the
name—

For I shall most sojourn in Nor-
mandy;

And thou be my vice-king in Eng-
land. Speak.

Wulfnoth (aside to Harold). Ay,
brother—for the sake of Eng-
land—ay.

Harold. My lord—

Malet (aside to Harold). Take
heed now.

Harold. Ay.

William. I am content,
For thou art truthful, and thy word
thy bond.

To-morrow will we ride with thee to
Harfleur. [*Exit William.*]

Malet. Harold, I am thy friend,
one life with thee,

And even as I should bless thee sav-
ing mine,

I thank thee now for having saved
thyself. [*Exit Malet.*]

Harold. For having lost myself to
save myself,

Said 'ay' when I meant 'no,' lied like
a lad

That dreads the pendent scourge, said
'ay' for 'no'!

Ay! No!—he hath not bound me by
an oath—

Is 'ay' an oath? is 'ay' strong as an
oath?

Or is it the same sin to break my
word

As break mine oath? He call'd my
word my bond!

He is a liar who knows I am a liar,
And makes believe that he believes
my word—

The crime be on his head—not
bounden—no.

[*Suddenly doors are flung open, dis-
covering in an inner hall
COUNT WILLIAM in his state
robes, seated upon his throne,
between two Bishops, ODO OF
BAYEUX being one: in the
centre of the hall an ark covered
with cloth of gold; and on
either side of it the Norman
barons.*]

Enter a JAILOR before William's throne.

William (to Jailor). Knave, hast thou let thy prisoner scape?

Jailor. Sir Count, He had but one foot, he must have hopt away, Yea, some familiar spirit must have help'd him.

William. Woe knave to thy familiar and to thee! Give me thy keys. [*They fall clashing.*]

Nay let them lie. Stand there and wait my will.

[*The Jailor stands aside.*]

William (to Harold). Hast thou such trustless jailors in thy North?

Harold. We have few prisoners in mine earldom there, So less chance for false keepers.

William. We have heard Of thy just, mild, and equal governance;

Honor to thee! thou art perfect in all honor!

Thy naked word thy bond! confirm it now

Before our gather'd Norman baronage,

For they will not believe thee—as I believe.

[*Descends from his throne and stands by the ark.*]

Let all men here bear witness of our bond! [*Beckons to Harold, who advances.*]

Enter MALET behind him.

Lay thou thy hand upon this golden pall!

Behold the jewel of St. Pancratius Woven into the gold. Swear thou on this!

Harold. What should I swear? Why should I swear on this?

William. (savagely). Swear thou to help me to the crown of England.

Malet (whispering Harold). My friend, thou hast gone too far to palter now.

Wulfnoth (whispering Harold). Swear thou to-day, to-morrow is thine own.

Harold. I swear to help thee to the crown of England . . . According as King Edward promises.

William. Thou must swear absolutely, noble Earl.

Malet (whispering). Delay is death to thee, ruin to England.

Wulfnoth (whispering). Swear, dearest brother, I beseech thee, swear!

Harold (putting his hand on the jewel). I swear to help thee to the crown of England.

William. Thanks, truthful Earl; I did not doubt thy word, But that my barons might believe thy word,

And that the Holy Saints of Normandy

When thou art home in England, with thine own,

Might strengthen thee in keeping of thy word,

I made thee swear.—Show him by whom he hath sworn.

[*The two Bishops advance, and raise the cloth of gold. The bodies and bones of Saints are seen lying in the ark.*]

The holy bones of all the Canonized

From all the holiest shrines in Normandy!

Harold. Horrible! [*They let the cloth fall again.*]

William. Ay, for thou hast sworn an oath

Which, if not kept, would make the hard earth rive

To the very Devil's horns, the bright sky cleave

To the very feet of God, and send her hosts

Of injured Saints to scatter sparks of plague

Thro' all your cities, blast your infants, dash

The torch of war among your stand-
ing corn,
Dabble your hearths with your own
blood.—Enough!
Thou wilt not break it! I, the
Count—the King—
Thy friend—am grateful for thine
honest oath,
Not coming fiercely like a conqueror,
now,
But softly as a bridegroom to his own.
For I shall rule according to your
laws,
And make your ever-jarring Earldoms
move
To music and in order—Angle, Jute,
Dane, Saxon, Norman, help to build a
throne
Out-towering hers of France . . . The
wind is fair
For England now . . . To-night we
will be merry.
To-morrow will I ride with thee to
Harfleur.

[*Exeunt William and all the
Norman barons, etc.*]

Harold. To-night we will be merry
—and to-morrow—
Juggler and bastard—bastard—he
hates that most—
William the tanner's bastard!
Would he heard me!
O God, that I were in some wide,
waste field
With nothing but my battle-axe and
him
To spatter his brains! Why let earth
rive, gulf in
These cursed Normans—yea and mine
own self.
Cleave heaven, and send thy saints
that I may say
Ev'n to their faces, 'If ye side with
William
Ye are not noble.' How their pointed
fingers
Glared at me! Am I Harold,
Harold, son
Of our great Godwin? Lo! I touch
mine arms,
My limbs—they are not mine—they
are a liar's—
I mean to be a liar—I am not bound—

Stigand shall give me absolution for
it—
Did the chest move? did it move? I
am utter craven!
O Wulfnoth, Wulfnoth, brother, thou
hast betray'd me!
Wulfnoth. Forgive me, brother,
I will live here and die.

Enter PAGE.

Page. My lord! the Duke awaits
thee at the banquet.

Harold. Where they eat dead
men's flesh, and drink their
blood.

Page. My Lord—

Harold. I know your Norman
cookery is so spiced,
It masks all this.

Page. My lord! thou art white
as death.

Harold. With looking on the dead.
Am I so white?

Thy Duke will seem the darker.
Hence, I follow. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT III.

SCENE I.—THE KING'S PALACE. LONDON.

KING EDWARD *dying on a couch, and
by him standing the* QUEEN, HAR-
OLD, ARCHBISHOP STIGAND,
GURTH, LEOFWIN, ARCHBISHOP
ALDRED, ALDWYTH, and EDITH.

Stigand. Sleeping or dying there?

If this be death,
Then our great Council wait to crown
thee King—

Come hither, I have a power;

[*To Harold.*]

They call me near, for I am close to
thee

And England—I, old shrivell'd
Stigand, I,

Dry as an old wood-fungus on a dead
tree

I have a power!

See here this little key about my neck!
 There lies a treasure buried down in Ely:
 If e'er the Norman grow too hard for thee,
 Ask me for this at thy most need, son Harold,
 At thy most need—not sooner.

Harold. So I will.

Stigand. Red gold—a hundred purses—yea, and more!

If thou canst make a wholesome use of these

To chink against the Norman, I do believe

My old crook'd spine would bud out two young wings

To fly to heaven straight with.

Harold. Thank thee, father! Thou art English, Edward too is English now,

He hath clean repented of his Normanism.

Stigand. Ay, as the libertine repents who cannot

Make done undone, when thro' his dying sense

Shrills 'lost thro' thee.' They have built their castles here;

Our priories are Norman; the Norman adder

Hath bitten us; we are poison'd: our dear England

Is demi-Norman. He!—

[*Pointing to King Edward, sleeping.*]

Harold. I would I were As holy and as passionless as he!

'That I might rest as calmly! Look at him—

The rosy face, and long down-silvering beard,

The brows unwrinkled as a summer mere.—

Stigand. A summer mere with sudden wreckful gusts

From a side-gorge. Passionless? How he flamed

When Tostig's anger'd earldom flung him, nay,

He fain had calcined all Northumbria To one black ash, but that thy patriot passion

Siding with our great Council against Tostig,

Out-passion'd his! Holy? ay, ay, forsooth,

A conscience for his own soul, not his realm;

A twilight conscience lighted thro' a chink;

Thine by the sun; nay, by some sun to be,

When all the world hath learnt to speak the truth,

And lying were self-murder by that state

Which was the exception.

Harold. That sun may God speed!

Stigand. Come, Harold, shake the cloud off!

Harold. Can I, father? Our Tostig parted cursing me and England;

Our sister hates us for his banishment;

He hath gone to kindle Norway against England,

And Wulfnoth is alone in Normandy. For when I rode with William down to Harfleur,

'Wulfnoth is sick,' he said; 'he cannot follow;'

Then with that friendly-fiendly smile of his,

'We have learnt to love him, let him a little longer

Remain a hostage for the loyalty Of Godwin's house.' As far as touches Wulfnoth

I that so prized plain word and naked truth

Have sinn'd against it—all in vain.

Leofwin. Good brother, By all the truths that ever priest hath preach'd,

Of all the lies that ever men have lied,

Thine is the pardonablest.

Harold. May be so! I think it so, I think I am a fool

To think it can be otherwise than so.

Stigand. Tut, tut, I have absolved thee: dost thou scorn me,

Because I had my Canterbury pallium, From one whom they disposed?

Harold. No, Stigand, no!

Stigand. Is naked truth actable in true life?

I have heard a saying of thy father Godwin,

That, were a man of state nakedly true,

Men would but take him for the craftier liar.

Leofwin. Be men less delicate than the Devil himself?

I thought that naked Truth would shame the Devil

The Devil is so modest.

Gurth. He never said it!

Leofwin. Be thou not stupid-honest, brother Gurth!

Harold. Better to be a liar's dog, and hold

My master honest, than believe that lying

And ruling men are fatal twins that cannot

Move one without the other. Edward wakes!—

Dazed—he hath seen a vision.

Edward. The green tree!

Then a great Angel past along the highest

Crying 'the doom of England,' and at once

He stood beside me, in his grasp a sword

Of lightnings, wherewithal he cleft the tree

From off the bearing trunk, and hurli'd it from him

Three fields away, and then he dash'd and drench'd,

He dyed, he soak'd the trunk with human blood,

And brought the sunder'd tree again, and set it

Straight on the trunk, that thus baptized in blood

Grew ever high and higher, beyond my seeing,

And shot out sidelong boughs across the deep

That dropt themselves, and rooted in far isles

Beyond my seeing: and the great Angel rose

And past again along the highest crying

'The doom of England!'—Tostig, raise my head!

[*Falls back senseless.*]

Harold (raising him). Let Harold serve for Tostig!

Queen. Harold served Tostig so ill, he cannot serve for Tostig!

Ay, raise his head, for thou hast laid it low!

The sickness of our saintly king, for whom

My prayers go up as fast as my tears fall,

I well believe, hath mainly drawn itself

From lack of Tostig—thou hast banish'd him.

Harold. Nay—but the council, and the king himself,

Queen. Thou hatest him, hatest him.

Harold (coldly). Ay—Stigand, unriddle

This vision, canst thou?

Stigand. Dotage!

Edward (starting up). It is fin- ish'd.

I have built the Lord a house—the Lord hath dwelt

In darkness. I have built the Lord a house—

Palms, flowers, pomegranates, golden cherubim

With twenty-cubit wings from wall to wall—

I have built the Lord a house—sing, Asaph! clash

The cymbal, Heman! blow the trumpet, priest!

Fall, cloud, and fill the house—lo! my two pillars,

Jachin and Boaz!—

[*Seeing Harold and Gurth.*]

Harold, Gurth,—where am I? Where is the charter of our Westminster?

Stigand. It lies beside thee, king, upon thy bed.

Edward. Sign, sign at once—take, sign it, Stigand, Aldred!

Sign it, my good son Harold, Gurth,
and Leofwin,
Sign it, my queen!

All. We have sign'd it.

Edward. It is finish'd!
The kingliest Abbey in all Christian
lands,
The lordliest, loftiest minster ever
built

To Holy Peter in our English isle!
Let me be buried there, and all our
kings,
And all our just and wise and holy
men

That shall be born hereafter. It is
finish'd!

Hast thou had absolution for thine
oath? [*To Harold.*]

Harold. Stigand hath given me
absolution for it.

Edward. Stigand is not canonical
enough

To save thee from the wrath of Nor-
man Saints.

Stigand. Norman enough! Be
there no Saints of England

To help us from their brethren yon-
der?

Edward. Prelate,
The Saints are one, but those of Nor-
manland

Are mightier than our own. Ask it
of Aldred. [*To Harold.*]

Aldred. It shall be granted him,
my king; for he

Who vows a vow to strangle his own
mother
Is guiltier keeping this, than breaking
it.

Edward. O friends, I shall not
over-live the day.

Stigand. Why then the throne is
empty. Who inherits?

For tho' we be not bound by the
king's voice

In making of a king, yet the king's
voice

Is much toward his making. Who
inherits?

Edgar the Atheling?

Edward. No, no, but Harold.

I love him: he hath served me: none
but he

Can rule all England. Yet the curse
is on him

For swearing falsely by those blessed
bones;

He did not mean to keep his vow.

Harold. Not mean
To make our England Norman.

Edward. There spake Godwin,
Who hated all the Normans; but
their Saints

Have heard thee, Harold.

Edith. Oh! my lord, my king!
He knew not whom he swore by.

Edward. Yea, I know
He knew not, but those heavenly ears

have heard,
Their curse is on him; wilt thou
bring another,

Edith, upon his head?

Edith. No, no, not I,

Edward. Why then, thou must
not wed him.

Harold. Wherefore, wherefore?
Edward. O son, when thou didst

tell me of thine oath,
I sorrow'd for my random promise

given
To yon fox-lion. I did not dream

then
I should be king.—My son, the Saints

are virgins;
They love the white rose of virgin-

ity,
The cold, white lily blowing in her

cell:
I have been myself a virgin; and I

swore
To consecrate my virgin here to

heaven—
The silent, cloister'd, solitary life,

A life of life-long prayer against the
curse

That lies on thee and England.

Harold. No, no, no,

Edward. Treble denial of the
tongue of flesh,

Like Peter's when he fell, and thou
wilt have

To wait for it like Peter. O my son!
Are all oaths to be broken then, all

promises
Made in our agony for help from

heaven?

Son, there is one who loves thee : and
a wife,
What matters who, so she be service-
able
In all obedience, as mine own hath
been :

God bless thee, wedded daughter.

[*Laying his hand on the Queen's head.*
Queen. Bless thou too

That brother whom I love beyond the
rest,

My banish'd Tostig.

Edward. All the sweet Saints
bless him !

Spare and forbear him, Harold, if he
comes !

And let him pass unscathed ; he loves
me, Harold !

Be kindly to the Normans left among
us,

Who follow'd me for love ! and dear
son, swear

When thou art king, to see my solemn
vow

Accomplish'd.

Harold. Nay, dear lord, for I have
sworn

Not to swear falsely twice.

Edward. Thou wilt not swear ?

Harold. I cannot.

Edward. Then on thee remains
the curse,

Harold, if thou embrace her : and on
thee,

Edith, if thou abide it,—

[*The King swoons ; Edith falls
and kneels by the couch.*

Stigand. He hath swoon'd !

Death ? . . . no, as yet a breath.

Harold. Look up ! look up !

Edith !

Aldred. Confuse her not ; she hath
begun

Her life-long prayer for thee.

Aldwyth. O noble Harold,
I would thou couldst have sworn.

Harold. For thine own pleasure ?

Aldwyth. No, but to please our
dying king, and those

Who make thy good their own—all
England, Earl.

Aldred. I would thou couldst have
sworn. Our holy king

Hath given his virgin lamb to Holy
Church

To save thee from the curse.

Harold. Alas ! poor man,
His promise brought it on me.

Aldred. O good son !
That knowledge made him all the

carefuller
To find a means whereby the curse

might glance
From thee and England.

Harold. Father, we so loved—

Aldred. The more the love, the
mightier is the prayer ;

The more the love, the more acceptable
The sacrifice of both your loves to

heaven.
No sacrifice to heaven, no help from

heaven ;
That runs thro' all the faiths of all the

world.
And sacrifice there must be, for the

king
Is holy, and hath talk'd with God, and

seen
A shadowing horror ; there are signs

in heaven—
Harold. Your comet came and

went.
Aldred. And signs on earth !

Knowest thou Senlac hill ?

Harold. I know all Sussex ;

A good entrenchment for a perilous
hour !

Aldred. Pray God that come not
suddenly ! There is one

Who passing by that hill three nights
ago—

He shook so that he scarce could out
with it—

Heard, heard—

Harold. The wind in his hair ?

Aldred. A ghostly horn
Blowing continually, and faint battle-

hymns,
And cries, and clashes, and the groans

of men ;
And dreadful shadows strove upon the

hill,
And dreadful lights crept up from out

the marsh—
Corpse-candles gliding over nameless

graves—

Harold. At Senlac?

Aldred. Senlac.

Edward (waking). Senlac! Sanguelac,
The Lake of Blood!

Stigand. This lightning before death
Plays on the word,—and Normanizes too!

Harold. Hush, father, hush!

Edward. Thou uncanonical fool,
Wilt thou play with the thunder?
North and South

Thunder together, showers of blood
are blown

Before a never ending blast, and hiss
Against the blaze they cannot quench
—a lake,

A sea of blood—we are drown'd in
blood—for God

Has fill'd the quiver, and Death has
drawn the bow—

Sanguelac! Sanguelac! the arrow!
the arrow!

Stigand. It is the arrow of death
in his own heart—

And our great Council wait to crown
thee King.

SCENE II.—IN THE GARDEN. THE
KING'S HOUSE NEAR LONDON.

Edith. Crown'd, crown'd and lost,
crown'd King—and lost to me!

(Singing.)

Two young lovers in winter weather,
None to guide them.
Walk'd at night on the misty heather;
Night, as black as a raven's feather;
Both were lost and found together,
None beside them.

That is the burthen of it—lost and
found
Together in the cruel river Swale
A hundred years ago; and there's
another,

Lost, lost, the light of day,

To which the lover answers lovingly

'I am beside thee.'

Lost, lost, we have lost the way.

'Love, I will guide thee.'

Whither, O whither? into the
river,

Where we two may be lost to-
gether,

And lost for ever? 'Oh! never,
oh! never,

Tho' we be lost and be found to-
gether.'

Some think they loved within the pale
forbidden

By Holy Church: but who shall say?
the truth

Was lost in that fierce North, where
they were lost.

Where all good things are lost, where
Tostig lost

The good hearts of his people. It is
Harold!

(Enter HAROLD.)

Harold the King!

Harold. Call me not King, but

Harold.

Edith. Nay, thou art King!

Harold. Thine, thine, or King
or churl!

My girl, thou hast been weeping:
turn not thou

Thy face away, but rather let me
be

King of the moment to thee, and
command

That kiss my due when subject,
which will make

My kingship kinglier to me than to
reign

King of the world without it.

Edith. Ask me not,
Lest I should yield it, and the second
curse

Descend upon thine head, and thou
be only

King of the moment over England.

Harold. Edith,
Tho' somewhat less a king to my true
self

Than ere they crown'd me one, for I
have lost



"A SATYR, A SATYR, SEE, FOLLOWS."—*Page 152.*



Somewhat of upright stature thro'
mine oath,
Yet thee I would not lose, and sell
not thou
Our living passion for a dead man's
dream;
Stigand believed he knew not what he
spake.
Oh God! I cannot help it, but at
times
They seem to me too narrow, all the
faiths
Of this grown world of ours, whose
baby eye
Saw them sufficient. Fool and wise,
I fear
This curse, and scorn it. But a little
light!—
And on it falls the shadow of the
priest;
Heaven yield us more! for better,
Woden, all
Our cancell'd warrior-gods, our grim
Walhalla,
Eternal war, than that the Saints at
peace
The Holiest of our Holiest one should
be
This William's fellow-tricksters;—bet-
ter die
Than credit this, for death is death,
or else
Lifts us beyond the lie. Kiss me—
thou art not
A holy sister yet, my girl, to fear
There might be more than brother in
my kiss,
And more than sister in thine own.
Edith. I dare not.
Harold. Scared by the church—
'Love for a whole life long'
When was that sung?
Edith. Here to the nightingales.
Harold. Their anthems of no
church, how sweet they are!
Nor kingly priest, nor priestly king to
cross
Their billings are they nest.
Edith. They are but of spring,
They fly the winter change—not so
with us—
No wings to come and go.
Harold. But wing'd souls flying

Beyond all change and in the eternal
distance
To settle on the Truth.

Edith. They are not so true,
They change their mates.

Harold. Do they? I did not know
it.

Edith. They say thou art to wed
the Lady Aldwyth.

Harold. They say, they say.

Edith. If this be politic,
And well for thee and England—and
for her—

Care not for me who love thee.

Gurth (calling). Harold, Harold!

Harold. The voice of Gurth!
(*Enter GURTH.*) Good even,
my good brother!

Gurth. Good even, gentle Edith.

Edith. Good even, Gurth.

Gurth. Ill news hath come! Our
hapless brother, Tostig—

He, and the giant King of Norway,
Harold

Hardrada—Scotland, Ireland, Iceland,
Orkney,

Are landed North of Humber, and in
a field

So packt with carnage that the dykes
and brooks

Were bridged and damm'd with dead,
have overthrown

Morcar and Edwin.

Harold. Well then, we must
fight.

How blows the wind?

Gurth. Against St. Valery

And William.

Harold. Well then, we will to the
North.

Gurth. Ay, but worse news: this
William sent to Rome,

Swearing thou swearest falsely by his
Saints:

The Pope and that Archdeacon Hilde-
brand

His master, heard him, and have sent
him back

A holy gonfanon, and a blessed hair
Of Peter, and all France, all Bur-
gundy,

Poitou, all Christendom is raised
against thee;

He hath cursed thee, and all those
who fight for thee,
And given thy realm of England to
the bastard.

Harold. Ha! ha!

Edith. Oh! laugh not! . . . Strange
and ghastly in the gloom
And shadowing of this double thun-
dercloud

That lours on England—laughter!

Harold. No, not strange!
This was old human laughter in old
Rome

Before a Pope was born, when that
which reign'd

Call'd itself God.—A kindly rendering
Of 'Render unto Caesar.' The
Good Shepherd!

Take this, and render that.

Gurth. They have taken York.

Harold. The Lord was God and
came as man—the Pope
Is man and comes as God.—York
taken?

Gurth. Yea,
Tostig hath taken York!

Harold. To York then. Edith,
Hadst thou been braver, I had better
braved

All—but I love thee and thou me—
and that

Remains beyond all chances and all
churches,

And that thou knowest.

Edith. Ay, but take back thy ring.
It burns my hand—a curse to thee
and me.

I dare not wear it.

[*Proffers Harold the ring, which
he takes.*]

Harold. But I dare. God with thee!

[*Exeunt Harold and Gurth.*]

Edith. The King hath cursed him,
if he marry me;

The Pope hath cursed him, marry me
or no!

God help me! I know nothing—can
but pray

For Harold—pray, pray, pray—no
help but prayer,

A breath that fleets beyond this iron
world,

And touches Him that made it.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—IN NORTHUMBRIA.

ARCHEBISHOP ALDRED, MORCAR,
EDWIN, and Forces. *Enter Har-
old. The standard of the golden
Dragon of Wessex preceding him.*

Harold. What! are thy people
sullen from defeat?

Our Wessex dragon flies beyond the
Humber,

No voice to greet it.

Edwin. Let not our great king
Believe us sullen—only shamed to the
quick

Before the king—as having been so
bruised

By Harold, king of Norway; but our
help

Is Harold, king of England. Pardon
us, thou!

Our silence is our reverence for the
king!

Harold. Earl of the Mercians! if
the truth be gall,

Cram me not thou with honey, when
our good hive

Needs every sting to save it.

Voices. Aldwyth, Aldwyth!

Harold. Why cry thy people on
thy sister's name?

Morcar. She hath won upon our
people thro' her beauty,
And pleasantness among them.

Voices. Aldwyth! Aldwyth!

Harold. They shout as they would
have her for a queen.

Morcar. She hath followed with
our host, and suffer'd all.

Harold. What would ye, men?

Voice. Our old Northumbrian
crown,

And kings of our own choosing.

Harold. Your old crown
Were little help without our Saxon
carles

Against Hardrada.

Voice. Little! we are Danes,
Who conquer'd what we walk on, our
own field.

Harold. They have been plotting here!

Voice. He calls us little!

Harold. The kingdoms of this world began with little,

A hill, a fort, a city—that reach'd a hand

Down to the field beneath it, 'Be thou mine,'

Then to the next, 'Thou also!' If the field

Cried out 'I am mine own;' another hill

Or fort, or city, took it, and the first Fell, and the next became an Empire.

Voice. Yet Thou art but a West Saxon: we are Danes!

Harold. My mother is a Dane, and I am English;

There is a pleasant fable in old books, Ye take a stick, and break it; bind a score

All in one faggot, snap it over knee, Ye cannot.

Voice. Hear King Harold! he says true!

Harold. Would ye be Norsemen?

Voices. No!

Harold. Or Norman?

Voices. No!

Harold. Snap not the faggot-band then.

Voice. That is true!

Voice. Ay, but thou art not kingly, only grandson

To Wulfnoth, a poor cow-herd.

Harold. This old Wulfnoth Would take me on his knees and tell me tales

Of Alfred and of Athelstan the Great Who drove you Danes; and yet he

held that Dane, Jute, Angle, Saxon, were or should be

all One England, for this cow-herd, like my father,

Who shook the Norman scoundrels off the throne,

Had in him kingly thoughts—a king of men,

Not made but born, like the great king of all,

A light among the oxen.

Voice. That is true!

Voice. Ay, and I love him now, for mine own father

Was great, and cobbled.

Voice. Thou art Tostig's brother, Who wastes the land.

Harold. This brother comes to save

Your land from waste; I saved it once before,

For when your people banish'd Tostig hence,

And Edward would have sent a host against you,

Then I, who loved my brother, bad the king

Who doted on him, sanction your decree

Of Tostig's banishment, and choice of Morcar,

To help the realm from scattering.

Voice. King! thy brother, If one may dare to speak the truth,

was wrong'd.

Wild was he, born so: but the plots against him

Had madden'd tamer men.

Morcar. Thou art one of those Who brake into Lord Tostig's treasure house

And slew two hundred of his following,

And now, when Tostig hath come back with power,

Are frighted back to Tostig.

Old Thane. Ugh! Plots and feuds! This is my ninetieth birthday. Can

ye not Be brethren? Godwin, still at feud

with Alfgar, And Alfgar hates King Harold.

Plots and feuds! This is my ninetieth birthday!

Harold. Old man, Harold Hates nothing; not his fault, if our

two houses Be less than brothers.

Voices. Aldwyth, Harold, Aldwyth!

Harold. Again! Morcar! Edwin! What do they mean?

Edwin. So the good king would
deign to lend an ear
Not over scornful, we might chance—
perchance—

To guess their meaning.

Morcar. Thine own meaning, Har-
old,

To make all England one, to close all
feuds,
Mixing our bloods, that thence a king
may rise

Half-Godwin and half-Alfgar, one to
rule

All England beyond question, beyond
quarrel.

Harold. Who sow'd this fancy
here among the people?

Morcar. Who knows what sows
itself among the people?
A goodly flower at times.

Harold. The Queen of Wales?
Why, *Morcar*, it is all but duty in
her

To hate me; I have heard she hates
me.

Morcar. No!
For I can swear to that, but cannot
swear

That these will follow thee against
the Norsemen,

If thou deny them this.

Harold. *Morcar* and *Edwin*,
When will ye cease to plot against
my house?

Edwin. The king can scarcely
dream that we, who know

His prowess in the mountains of the
West,

Should care to plot against him in
the North.

Morcar. Who dares arraign us,
king, of such a plot?

Harold. Ye heard one witness even
now.

Morcar. The craven!
There is a faction risen again for

Tostig,

Since *Tostig* came with Norway—
fright not love.

Harold. *Morcar* and *Edwin*, will
ye, if I yield,

Follow against the Norseman?

Morcar. Surely, surely!

Harold. *Morcar* and *Edwin*, will
ye upon oath,

Help us against the Norman?

Morcar. With good will;

Yea, take the Sacrament upon it, king.

Harold. Where is thy sister?

Morcar. Somewhere hard at hand.

Call and she comes.

[One goes out, then enter Aldwyth.]

Harold. I doubt not but thou
knowest

Why thou art summon'd.

Aldwyth. Why?—I stay with
these,

Lest thy fierce *Tostig* spy me out
alone,

And flay me all alive.

Harold. Canst thou love one
Who did discrown thine husband, un-
queen thee?

Didst thou not love thine husband?

Aldwyth. Oh! my lord,
The nimble, wild, red, wiry, savage

king—

That was, my lord, a match of pol-
icy.

Harold. Was it?
I knew him brave: he loved his land:

he fain

Had made her great: his finger on
her harp

(I heard him more than once) had in
it Wales,

Her floods, her woods, her hills: had
I been his,

I had been all Welsh.

Aldwyth. Oh, ay—all Welsh—and
yet

I saw thee drive him up his hills—
and women

Cling to the conquer'd, if they love,
the more;

If not, they cannot hate the conqueror.
We never—oh! good *Morcar*, speak

for us,

His conqueror conquer'd *Aldwyth*.

Harold. Goodly news!

Morcar. Doubt it not thou! Since
Griffyth's head was sent

To *Edward*, she hath said it.

Harold. I had rather
She would have loved her husband.

Aldwyth, Aldwyth,

Canst thou love me, thou knowing
where I love?

Aldwyth. I can, my lord, for mine
own sake, for thine,
For England, for thy poor white dove,
who flutters

Between thee and the porch, but then
would find

Her nest within the cloister, and be
still.

Harold. Canst thou love one, who
cannot love again?

Aldwyth. Full hope have I that
love will answer love.

Harold. Then in the name of the
great God, so be it!

Come, Aldred, join our hands before
the hosts,

That all may see.

[*Aldred joins the hands of Harold
and Aldwyth and blesses them.*]

Voices. Harold, Harold and Ald-
wyth!

Harold. Set forth our golden
Dragon, let him flap

The wings that beat down Wales!
Advance our Standard of the War-

rior,
Dark among gems and gold; and
thou, brave banner,

Blaze like a night of fatal stars on
those

Who read their doom and die.
Where lie the Norsemen? on the

Derwent? ay
At Stamford-bridge.

Morcar, collect thy men; Edwin, my
friend—

Thou lingerest.—*Gurth,*—
Last night King Edward came to me

in dreams—
The rosy face and long down-silvering

beard—
He told me I should conquer:—

I am no woman to put faith in dreams.

(*To his army.*)

Last night King Edward came to me
in dreams,

And told me we should conquer.

Voices. Forward! Forward!

Harold and Holy Cross!

Aldwyth. The day is won!

SCENE II.—A PLAIN. BEFORE
THE BATTLE OF STAMFORD-
BRIDGE.

HAROLD and his Guard.

Harold. Who is it comes this way?

Tostig? (Enter *TOSTIG with a
small force.*) O brother,

What art thou doing here?

Tostig. I am foraging
For Norway's army.

Harold. I could take and slay
thee.

Thou art in arms against us.

Tostig. Take and slay me,
For Edward loved me.

Harold. Edward bad me spare
thee.

Tostig. I hate King Edward, for he
join'd with thee

To drive me outlaw'd. Take and slay
me, I say,

Or I shall count thee fool.

Harold. Take thee, or free thee,
Free thee or slay thee, Norway will

have war;
No man would strike with *Tostig*,

save for Norway.
Thou art nothing in thine England,

save for Norway,
Who loves not thee but war. What

dost thou here,
Trampling thy mother's bosom into

blood?
Tostig. She hath wean'd me from

it with such bitterness.
I come for mine own Earldom, my

Northumbria;
Thou hast given it to the enemy of

our house.
Harold. Northumbria threw thee

off, she will not have thee,
Thou hast misused her: and, O

crowning crime!
Hast murder'd thine own guest, the

son of Orm,
Gamel, at thine own hearth.

Tostig. The slow, fat fool!
He draw'd and prated so, I smote

him suddenly,
I knew not what I did. He held with

Morcar.—

I hate myself for all things that I do.

Harold. And Morcar holds with us. Come back with him.

Know what thou dost; and we may find for thee,

So thou be chasten'd by thy banishment,

Some easier earldom.

Tostig. What for Norway then? He looks for land among us, he and his.

Harold. Seven feet of English land, or something more, Seeing he is a giant.

Tostig. That is noble! That sounds of Godwin.

Harold. Come thou back, and be Once more a son of Godwin.

Tostig (turns away). O brother, brother,

O Harold—

Harold (laying his hand on Tostig's shoulder). Nay then, come thou back to us!

Tostig (after a pause turning to him). Never shall any man say that I, that Tostig

Conjured the mightier Harold from his North

To do the battle for me here in England,

Then left him for the meaner! thee!—

Thou hast no passion for the House of Godwin—

Thou hast but cared to make thyself a king—

Thou hast sold me for a cry.—

Thou gavest thy voice against me in the Council—

I hate thee, and despise thee, and defy thee.

Farewell for ever! *[Exit.]*

Harold. On to Stamford-bridge!

SCENE III.

AFTER THE BATTLE OF STAMFORD-BRIDGE. BANQUET.

HAROLD and ALDWYTH. GURTH, LEOFWIN, MORCAR, EDWIN, and other Earls and Thanes.

Voices. Hail! Harold! Aldwyth! hail, bridegroom and bride!

Aldwyth (talking with Harold). Answer them thou!

Is this our marriage-banquet? Would the wines

Of wedding had been dash'd into the cups

Of victory, and our marriage and thy glory

Been drunk together! these poor hands but sew,

Spin, broider—would that they were man's to have held

The battle-axe by thee!

Harold. There was a moment When being forced aloof from all my

guard, And striking at Hardrada and his madmen

I had wish'd for any weapon.

Aldwyth. Why art thou sad? *Harold.* I have lost the boy who

play'd at ball with me, With whom I fought another fight

than this

Of Stamford-bridge.

Aldwyth. Ay! ay! thy victories Over our own poor Wales, when at

thy side

He conquer'd with thee.

Harold. No—the childish fist That cannot strike again.

Aldwyth. Thou art too kindly. Why didst thou let so many Norse-

men hence?

Thy fierce forekings had clench'd their pirate hides

To the bleak church doors, like kites upon a barn.

Harold. Is there so great a need to tell thee why?

Aldwyth. Yea, am I not thy wife?

Voices. Hail, Harold, Aldwyth! Bridegroom and bride!

Aldwyth. Answer them!

[To Harold.] Harold (to all). Earls and Thanes!

Full thanks for your fair greeting of my bride!

Earls, Thanes, and all our countrymen! the day,

Our day beside the Derwent will not
shine
Less than a star among the goldenest
hours
Of Alfred, or of Edward his great
son,
Or Athelstan, or English Ironside
Who fought with Knut, or Knut who
coming Dane
Died English. Every man about his
king
Fought like a king; the king like his
own man,
No better; one for all, and all for
one,
One soul! and therefore have we
shatter'd back
The hugest wave from Norseland
ever yet
Surged on us, and our battle-axes
broken
The Raven's wing, and dumb'd his
carrion croak
From the gray sea for ever. Many
are gone—
Drink to the dead who died for us,
the living
Who fought and would have died, but
happier lived,
If happier be to live; they both have
life
In the large mouth of England, till
her voice
Die with the world. Hail—hail!
Morcar. May all invaders perish
like Hardrada!
All traitors fail like Tostig!
[*All drink but Harold.*
Aldwyth. Thy cup's full!
Harold. I saw the hand of Tostig
cover it.
Our dear, dead, traitor-brother, Tostig,
him
Reverently we buried. Friends, had
I been here,
Without too large self-lauding I must
hold
The sequel had been other than his
league
With Norway, and this battle. Peace
be with him!
He was not of the worst. If there be
those

At banquet in this hall, and hearing
me—
For there be those I fear who prick'd
the lion
To make him spring, that sight of
Danish blood
Might serve an end not English—
peace with them
Likewise, if *they* can be at peace with
what
God gave us to divide us from the
wolf!
Aldwyth (*aside to Harold*). Make
not our *Morcar* sullen: it is
not wise.
Harold. Hail to the living who
fought, the dead who fell!
Voices. Hail, hail!
First Thane. How ran that answer
which King Harold gave
To his dead namesake, when he ask'd
for England?
Leofwin. 'Seven feet of English
earth, or something more,
Seeing he is a giant!'
First Thane. Then for the bas-
tard
Six feet and nothing more!
Leofwin. Ay, but belike
Thou hast not learnt his measure
First Thane. By St. Edmund
I over-measure him. Sound sleep to
the man
Here by dead Norway without dream
or dawn!
Second Thane. What is he brag-
ging still that he will come
To thrust our Harold's throne from
under him?
My nurse would tell me of a molchill
crying
To a mountain 'Stand aside and
room for me!'
First Thane. Let him come! let
him come. Here's to him, sink
or swim! [*Drinks.*]
Second Thane. God sink him!
First Thane. Cannot hands which
had the strength
To shove that stranded iceberg off
our shores,
And send the shatter'd North again
to sea,

Scuttle his cockle-shell? What's
 Brunanburg
 To Stamford-bridge? a war-crash, and
 so hard,
 So loud, that, by St. Dunstan, old St.
 Thor—
 By God, we thought him dead—but
 our old Thor
 Heard his own thunder again, and
 woke and came
 Among us again, and mark'd the sons
 of those
 Who made this Britain England,
 break the North:

Mark'd how the war-axe swang,
 Heard how the war-horn sang,
 Mark'd how the spear-head sprang,
 Heard how the shield-wall rang,
 Iron on iron clang,
 Anvil on hammer bang—

Second Thane. Hammer on anvil,
 hammer on anvil. Old dog,
 Thou art drunk, old dog!

First Thane. Too drunk to fight
 with thee!

Second Thane. Fight thou with
 thine own double, not with me,
 Keep that for Norman William!

First Thane. Down with William!

Third Thane. The washerwoman's
 brat!

Fourth Thane. The tanner's bas-
 tard!

Fifth Thane. The Falaise byblow!

[*Enter a Thane, from Pevensey,*
spatter'd with mud.

Harold. Ay, but what late guest,
 As haggard as a fast of forty days,
 And caked and plaster'd with a hun-
 dred mires,
 Hath stumbled on our cups?

Thane from Pevensey. My lord the
 King!

William the Norman, for the wind
 had changed—

Harold. I felt it in the middle of
 that fierce fight

At Stamford-bridge. William hath
 landed, ha?

Thane from Pevensey. Landed at
 Pevensey—I am from Peven-
 sey—

Hath wasted all the land at Peven-
 sey—

Hath harried mine own cattle—God
 confound him!

I have ridden night and day from
 Pevensey—

A thousand ships—a hundred thou-
 sand men—

Thousands of horses, like as many
 lions

Neighing and roaring as they leapt to
 land—

Harold. How oft in coming hast
 thou broken bread?

Thane from Pevensey. Some thrice,
 or so.

Harold. Bring not thy hollowness
 On our full feast. Famine is fear,
 were it but

Of being starved. Sit down, sit
 down, and eat,

And, when again red-blooded, speak
 again;

(*Aside.*) The men that guarded
 England to the South

Were scatter'd to the harvest. . . .
 No power mine

To hold their force together. . . .
 Many are fallen

At Stamford-bridge . . . the peo-
 ple stupid-sure

Sleep like their swine . . . in
 South and North at once

I could not be.

(*Aloud.*) Gurth, Leofwin, Morcar,
 Edwin!

(*Pointing to the revellers.*) The curse
 of England! these are drown'd
 in wassail,

And cannot see the world but thro'
 their wines!

Leave them! and thee too! Aldwyth,
 must I leave—

Harsh is the news! hard is our
 honeymoon!

Thy pardon. (*Turning round to his
 attendants.*) Break the ban-
 quet up . . . Ye four!

And thou, my carrier-pigeon of black
 news,

Cram thy crop full, but come when
thou art call'd. [*Exit Harold.*]

ACT V.

SCENE I.—A TENT ON A MOUND,
FROM WHICH CAN BE SEEN THE
FIELD OF SENLAC.

HAROLD, *sitting; by him standing*
HUGH MARGOT *the Monk*, GURTH,
LEOFWIN.

Harold. Refer my cause, my
crown to Rome! . . . The
wolf
Mudded the brook and predetermined
all.

Monk,
Thou hast said thy say, and had my
constant 'No'
For all but instant battle. I hear no
more.

Margot. Hear me again—for the
last time. Arise,
Scatter thy people home, descend the
hill.

Lay hands of full allegiance in thy
Lord's
And crave his mercy, for the Holy
Father

Hath given this realm of England to
the Norman.

Harold. Then for the last time,
monk, I ask again
When had the Lateran and the Holy
Father

To do with England's choice of her
own king?

Margot. Earl, the first Christian
Cæsar drew to the East

To leave the Pope dominion in the
West.

He gave him all the kingdoms of the
West.

Harold. So!—did he?—Earl—I
have a mind to play

The William with thine eyesight and
thy tongue.

Earl—ay—thou art but a messenger
of William.

I am weary—go: make me not wroth
with thee!

Margot. Mock-king, I am the mes-
senger of God,
His Norman Daniel! Mene, Mene,
Tekel!

Is thy wrath Hell, that I should spare
to cry,

Yon heaven is wroth with thee?
Hear me again!

Our Saints have moved the Church
that moves the world,
And all the Heavens and very God:
they heard—

They know King Edward's promise
and thine—thine.

Harold. Should they not know
free England crowns her-
self?

Not know that he nor I had power to
promise?

Not know that Edward cancell'd his
own promise?

And for my part therein—Back to
that juggler, [*Rising.*]

Tell him the Saints are nobler than
he dreams,

Tell him that God is nobler than the
Saints,

And tell him we stand arm'd on
Senlac Hill,

And bide the doom of God.

Margot. Hear it thro' me.
The realm for which thou art fore-
sworn is cursed,

The babe enwomb'd and at the breast
is cursed,

The corpse thou whelmest with thine
earth is cursed,

The soul who fighteth on thy side is
cursed,

The seed thou sowest in thy field is
cursed,

The steer wherewith thou plowest thy
field is cursed,

The fowl that fleeth o'er thy field is
cursed.

And thou, usurper, liar—

Harold. Out, beast monk!

[*Lifting his hand to strike him.*
Gurth stops the blow.

I ever hated monks.

Margot. I am but a voice
Among you: murder, martyr me if ye
will—

Harold. Thanks, Gurth! The simple, silent, selfless man Is worth a world of tonguesters. (*To Margot.*) Get thee gone! He means the thing he says. See him out safe!

Leofwin. He hath blown himself as red as fire with curses. An honest fool! Follow me, honest fool, But if thou blurt thy curse among our folk, I know not—I may give that egg-bald head The tap that silences.

Harold. See him out safe.

[*Exeunt Leofwin and Margot.*]

Gurth. Thou hast lost thine even temper, brother Harold!

Harold. Gurth, when I past by Waltham, my foundation For men who serve the neighbor, not themselves, I cast me down prone, praying; and, when I rose, They told me that the Holy Rood had lean'd And bow'd above me; whether that which held it Had weaken'd, and the Rood itself were bound To that necessity which binds us down; Whether it bow'd at all but in their fancy; Or if it bow'd, whether it symbol'd ruin Or glory, who shall tell? but they were sad, And somewhat sadden'd me.

Gurth. Yet if a fear, Or shadow of a fear, lest the strange Saints By whom thou swarest, should have power to balk Thy puissance in this fight with him, who made And heard thee swear—brother—I have not sworn— If the king fall, may not the kingdom fall?

But if I fall, I fall, and thou art king; And, if I win, I win, and thou art king;

Draw thou to London, there make strength to breast Whatever chance, but leave this day to me.

Leofwin (entering). And waste the land about thee as thou goest, And be thy hand as winter on the field, To leave the foe no forage.

Harold. Noble Gurth! Best son of Godwin! If I fall, I fall—

The doom of God! How should the people fight When the King flies? And, Leofwin, art thou mad?

How should the King of England waste the fields Of England, his own people?—No glance yet Of the Northumbrian helmet on the heath?

Leofwin. No, but a shoal of wives upon the heath, And someone saw thy willy-nilly nun Vying a tress against our golden fern.

Harold. Vying a tear with our cold dews, a sigh With these low-moaning heavens. Let her be fetch'd.

We have parted from our wife without reproach, Tho' we have pierced thro' all her practices; And that is well.

Leofwin. I saw her even now: She hath not left us.

Harold. Nought of Morcar then? *Gurth.* Nor seen, nor heard; thine, William's or his own

As wind blows, or tide flows: belike he watches, If this war-storm in one of its rough rolls Wash up that old crown of Northumberland.

Harold. I married her for Morcar—a sin against

The truth of love. Evil for good, it seems, Is oft as childless of the good as evil

For evil.

Leofwin. Good for good hath borne at times

A bastard false as William.

Harold. Ay, if Wisdom Pair'd not with Good. But I am somewhat worn,

A snatch of sleep were like the peace of God.

Gurth, Leofwin, go once more about the hill—

What did the dead man call it—Sanguelac,

The lake of blood?

Leofwin. A lake that dips in William

As well as Harold.

Harold. Like enough. I have seen

The trenches dug, the palisades up-rear'd

And wattled thick with ash and willow-wands;

Yea, wrought at them myself. Go round once more;

See all be sound and whole. No Norman horse

Can shatter England, standing shield by shield;

Tell that again to all.

Gurth. I will, good brother.

Harold. Our guardsman hath but toil'd his hand and foot,

I hand, foot, heart and head. Some wine! (*One pours wine into a goblet which he hands to Harold.*)

Too much!

What? we must use our battle-axe to-day.

Our guardsmen have slept well, since we came in?

Leofwin. Ay, slept and snored.

Your second-sighted man

That scared the dying conscience of the king,

Misheard their snores for groans.

They are up again

And chanting that old song of Brunanburg

Where England conquer'd.

Harold. That is well. The Norman,

What is he doing?

Leofwin. Praying for Normandy; Our scouts have heard the tinkle of their bells.

Harold. And our old songs are prayers for England too!

But by all Saints—

Leofwin. Barring the Norman!

Harold. Nay, Were the great trumpet blowing

doomsday dawn,

I needs must rest. Call when the Norman moves—

[*Exeunt all, but Harold.* No horse—thousands of horses—our shield wall—

Wall—break it not—break not—break—

[*Sleeps.* *Vision of Edward.* Son Harold, I

thy king, who came before

To tell thee thou shouldst win at Stamford-bridge,

Come yet once more, from where I am at peace,

Because I loved thee in my mortal day,

To tell thee thou shalt die on Senlac hill—

Sanguelac!

Vision of Wulfnoth. O brother, from my ghastly oubliette

I send my voice across the narrow seas—

No more, no more, dear brother, never-more—

Sanguelac!

Vision of Tostig. O brother, most unbrotherlike to me,

Thou gavest thy voice against me in my life,

I give my voice against thee from the grave—

Sanguelac!

Vision of Norman Saints. O hapless Harold! King but for an hour!

Thou swarest falsely by our blessed bones,

We give our voice against thee out of heaven!

Sanguelac! Sanguelac! The arrow! the arrow!

Harold (starting up, battle-axe in hand). Away!

My battle-axe against your voices.
Peace!

The king's last word—'the arrow!'
I shall die—

I die for England then, who lived for
England—

What nobler? men must die.
I cannot fall into a falser
world—

I have done no man wrong. Tostig,
poor brother,

Art thou so anger'd?

Fain had I kept thine earldom in thy
hands

Save for thy wild and violent will
that wretch'd

All hearts of freemen from thee. I
could do

No other than this way advise the
king

Against the race of Godwin. Is it
possible

That mortal men should bear their
earthly heats

Into yon bloodless world, and threaten
us thence

Unschool'd of Death? Thus then
thou art revenged—

I left our England naked to the
South

To meet thee in the North. The
Norseman's raid

Hath helpt the Norman, and the race
of Godwin

Hath ruin'd Godwin. No—our wak-
ing thoughts

Suffer a stormless shipwreck in the
pools

Of sullen slumber, and arise
again

Disjointed: only dreams—where
mine own self

Takes part against myself! Why?
for a spark

Of self-disdain born in me when I
sware

Falsely to him, the falser Norman,
over

His gilded ark of mummy-saints, by
whom

I knew not that I swear,—not for my-
self—

For England—yet not wholly—

(Enter EDITH.)

Edith, Edith,
Get thou into thy cloister as the king
Will'd it be safe: the perjury-mon-
gering Count

Hath made too good an use of Holy
Church

To break her close! There the great
God of truth

Fill all thine hours with peace!—A
lying devil

Hath haunted me—mine oath—my
wife—I fain

Had made my marriage not a lie; I
could not:

Thou art my bride! and thou in after
years

Praying perchance for this poor soul
of mine

In cold, white cells beneath an icy
moon—

This memory to thee!—and this to
England,

My legacy of war against the Pope
From child to child, from Pope to

Pope, from age to age,
Till the sea wash her level with her

shores,
Or till the Pope be Christ's.

Enter ALDWYTH.

Aldwyth (to Edith). Away from
him!

Edith. I will . . . I have not
spoken to the king

One word; and one I must. Fare-
well!

Harold. [Going.
Not yet.
Stay.

Edith. To what use?

Harold. The king commands thee,
woman!

(To Aldwyth.)

Have thy two brethren sent their
forces in?

Aldwyth. Nay, I fear not.

Harold. Then there's no force in
thee!

Thou didst possess thyself of Ed-
ward's ear

To part me from the woman that I
loved!

Thou didst arouse the fierce Northumbrians!

Thou hast been false to England and to me!

As . . . in some sort . . . I have been false to thee.

Leave me. No more—Pardon on both sides—Go!

Aldwyth. Alas, my lord, I loved thee.

Harold (bitterly). With a love
Passing thy love for Griffyth! wherefore now

Obey my first and last commandment.
Go!

Aldwyth. O Harold! husband!
Shall we meet again?

Harold. After the battle—after the battle. Go.

Aldwyth. I go. (*Aside.*) That I could stab her standing there!

Edith. Alas, my lord, she loved thee.

Harold. Never! never!

Edith. I saw it in her eyes!

Harold. I see it in thine.
And not on thee—nor England—fall
God's doom!

Edith. On thee? on me. And thou art England! Alfred
Was England. Ethelred was nothing. England

Is but her king, and thou art Harold!

Harold. Edith,
The sign in heaven—the sudden blast
at sea—

My fatal oath—the dead Saints—the
dark dreams—

The Pope's Anathema—the Holy
Rood

That bow'd to me at Waltham—Edith,
if

I, the last English King of England—
Edith. No,

First of a line that coming from the
people,

And chosen by the people—

Harold. And fighting for
And dying for the people—

Edith. Living! living!

Harold. Yea so, good cheer! thou
art Harold, I am Edith!

Look not thus wan!

Edith. What matters how I look?
Have we not broken Wales and
Norseland? slain,

Whose life was all one battle, incarnate war,

Their giant-king, a mightier man-in-arms

Than William.

Harold. Ay, my girl, no tricks in him—

No bastard he! when all was lost, he
yell'd,

And bit his shield, and dash'd it on
the ground,

And swaying his two-handed sword
about him,

Two deaths at every swing, ran in
upon us

And died so, and I loved him as I
hate

This liar who made me liar. If Hate
can kill,

And Loathing wield a Saxon battle-axe—

Edith. Waste not thy might before
the battle!

Harold. No,
And thou must hence. Stigand will
see thee safe,

And so—Farewell.

[*He is going, but turns back.*
The ring thou dardest not wear,
I have had it fashion'd, see, to meet
my hand.

[*Harold shows the ring which is on his finger.*

Farewell!

[*He is going, but turns back again.*
I am dead as Death this day to ought
of earth's

Save William's death or mine.

Edith. Thy death!—to-day!

Is it not thy birthday?

Harold. Ay, that happy day!
A birthday welcome! happy days
and many!

One—this! [*They embrace.*

Look, I will bear thy blessing into the
battle

And front the doom of God.

[*No man cries (heard in the distance).*
Ha Rou! Ha Rou!

Enter GURTH.

Gurth. The Norman moves!

Harold. Harold and Holy Cross!

[*Exeunt Harold and Gurth.*]

Enter STIGAND.

Stigand. Our Church in arms—the
lamb the lion—not

Spear into pruning-hook—the counter
way—

Cowl, helm; and crozier, battle-axe.
Abbot Alfwig,

Leofric, and all the monks of Peter-
boro'

Strike for the king; but I, old wretch,
old Stigand,

With hands too limp to brandish iron
—and yet

I have a power—would Harold ask
me for it—

I have a power.

Edith. What power, holy father?

Stigand. Power now from Harold
to command thee hence

And see thee safe from Senlac.

Edith. I remain!

Stigand. Yea, so will I, daughter,
until I find

Which way the battle balance. I can
see it

From where we stand: and, live or
die, I would

I were among them!

*Canons from Waltham (singing with-
out).*

Salva patriam
Sancte Pater,
Salva Fili,
Salva Spiritus,
Salva patriam,
Sancta Mater.¹

Edith. Are those the blessed angels
quiring, father?

Stigand. No, daughter, but the
canons out of Waltham,

¹ The *a* throughout these Latin hymns
should be sounded broad, as in 'father.'

The king's foundation, that have fol-
low'd him.

Edith. O God of battles, make
their wall of shields

Firm as thy cliffs, strengthen their
palisades!

What is that whirring sound?

Stigand. The Norman arrow!

Edith. Look out upon the battle—
is he safe?

Stigand. The king of England
stands between his banners.

He glitters on the crowning of the
hill.

God save King Harold!

Edith. —chosen by his people
And fighting for his people!

Stigand. There is one
Come as Goliath came of yore—he
flings

His brand in air and catches it
again,

He is chanting some old warsong.

Edith. And no David
To meet him?

Stigand. Ay, there springs a Saxon
on him,

Falls—and another falls.

Edith. Have mercy on us!

Stigand. Lo! our good Gurth hath
smitten him to the death.

Edith. So perish all the enemies
of Harold!

Canons (singing).

Hostis in Angliam
Ruit prædator,
Illorum, Domine,
Scutum scindatur!
Hostis per Angliæ
Plagas bacchatur;
Casa crematur,
Pastor fugatur
Grex trucidatur—

Stigand. Illos trucidâ, Domine.

Edith. Ay, good father.

Canons (singing).

Illorum scelera
Pœna sequatur!

English cries. Harold and Holy
Cross! Out! Out!

Stigand. Our javelins
Answer their arrows. All the Nor-
man foot
Are storming up the hill. The range
of knights
Sit, each a statue on his horse, and
wait.

English cries. Harold and God
Almighty!

Norman cries. Ha Rou! Ha Rou!

Canons (singing).

*Eques cum pedite
Præpediatur!
Illorum in lacrymas
Cruor fundatur!
Pereant, pereant,
Anglia precatur.*

Stigand. Look, daughter, look.

Edith. Nay, father, look for me!

Stigand. Our axes lighten with a
single flash

About the summit of the hill, and
heads

And arms are sliver'd off and splin-
ter'd by

Their lightning—and they fly—the
Norman flies.

Edith. Stigand, O father, have we
won the day?

Stigand. No, daughter, no—they
fall behind the horse—

Their horse are thronging to the barri-
cades;

I see the gonfanon of Holy Peter
Floating above their helmets—ha! he
is down!

Edith. He down! Who down?

Stigand. The Norman Count is
down.

Edith. So perish all the enemies
of England!

Stigand. No, no, he hath risen
again—he bares his face—

Shouts something—he points onward
—all their horse

Swallow the hill locust-like, swarming
up.

Edith. O God of battles, make his
battle-axe keen

As thine own sharp-dividing justice,
heavy

As thine own bolts that fall on crime-
ful heads

Charged with the weight of heaven
wherefrom they fall!

Canons (singing).

*Jacta tonitrua
Deus bellator!
Surgas e tenebris,
Sis vindicator!
Fulmina, fulmina
Deus vastator!*

Edith. O God of battles, they are
three to one,
Make thou one man as three to roll
them down!

Canons (singing).

*Equus cum equite
Dejiciatur!
Acies, Acies
Prona sternatur!
Illorum lanceas
Frange Creator!*

Stigand. Yea, yea, for how their
lances snap and shiver
Against the shifting blaze of Harold's
axe!

War-woodman of old Woden, how he
fells

The mortal copse of faces! There!
And there!

The horse and horseman cannot meet
the shield,

The blow that brains the horseman
cleaves the horse,

The horse and horseman roll along
the hill,

They fly once more, they fly, the Nor-
man flies!

*Equus cum equite
Præcipitatur.*

Edith. O God, the God of truth
hath heard my cry.

Follow them, follow them, drive them
to the sea!

*Illorum scelera
Pœna sequatur!*

Stigand. Truth! no; a lie; a trick,
a Norman trick!

They turn on the pursuer, horse
against foot,
They murder all that follow.

Edith. Have mercy on us!

Stigand. Hot-headed fools—to
burst the wall of shields!

They have broken the commandment
of the king!

Edith. His oath was broken—O
holy Norman Saints,

Ye that are now of heaven, and see
beyond

Your Norman shrines, pardon it, par-
don it,

That he forswore himself for all he
loved,

Me, me and all! Look out upon the
battle!

Stigand. They thunder again upon
the barricades.

My sight is eagle, but the strife so
thick—

This is the hottest of it: hold, ash!
hold, willow!

English cries. Out, out!

Norman cries. Ha Rou!

Stigand. Ha! Gurth hath leapt
upon him

And slain him: he hath fallen.

Edith. And I am heard.

Glory to God in the Highest! fallen,
fallen!

Stigand. No, no, his horse—he
mounts another—wields

His war club, dashes it on Gurth, and
Gurth,

Our noble Gurth, is down!

Edith. Have mercy on us!

Stigand. And Leofwin is down!

Edith. Have mercy on us!

O Thou that knowest, let not my
strong prayer

Be weaken'd in thy sight, because I
love

The husband of another!

Norman cries. Ha Rou! Ha Rou!

Edith. I do not hear our English
war-cry.

Stigand. No.

Edith. Look out upon the battle

—is he safe?

Stigand. He stands between the
banners with the dead

So piled about him he can hardly
move.

Edith (takes up the war-cry). Out!
out!

Norman cries. Ha Rou!

Edith (cries out). Harold and Holy
Cross!

Norman cries. Ha Rou! Ha
Rou!

Edith. What is that whirring
sound?

Stigand. The Norman sends his
arrows up to Heaven,

They fall on those within the pali-
sade!

Edith. Look out upon the hill—is
Harold there?

Stigand. Sanguelac—Sanguelac—
the arrow—the arrow!—away!

SCENE II.—FIELD OF THE DEAD. NIGHT.

ALDWYTH and EDITH.

Aldwyth. O Edith, art thou here?
O Harold, Harold—

Our Harold—we shall never see him
more.

Edith. For there was more than
sister in my kiss,

And so the saints were wroth. I can-
not love them,

For they are Norman saints—and yet
I should—

They are so much holier than their
harlot's son

With whom they play'd their game
against the king!

Aldwyth. The king is slain, the
kingdom overthrown!

Edith. No matter!

Aldwyth. How no matter, Harold
slain?

I cannot find his body. O help me
thou!

O Edith, if I ever wrought against
thee,

Forgive me thou, and help me here!

Edith. No matter!

Aldwyth. Not help me, nor forgive
me?

Edith. So thou saiest.
Aldwyth. I say it now, forgive me!

Edith. Cross me not!
 I am seeking one who wedded me in secret.

Whisper! God's angels only know it.
 Ha!

What art thou doing here among the dead?

They are stripping the dead bodies naked yonder,

And thou art come to rob them of their rings!

Aldwyth. O Edith, Edith, I have lost both crown
 And husband.

Edith. So have I.
Aldwyth. I tell thee, girl,
 I am seeking my dead Harold.

Edith. And I mine!
 The Holy Father strangled him with a hair

Of Peter, and his brother Tostig helpt;

The wicked sister clapt her hands and laugh'd;

Then all the dead fell on him.

Aldwyth. Edith, Edith—
Edith. What was he like, this husband? like to thee?

Call not for help from me. I knew him not.

He lies not here: not close beside the standard.

Here fell the truest, manliest hearts of England.

Go further hence and find him.

Aldwyth. She is crazed!
Edith. That doth not matter either. Lower the light.

He must be here.

Enter two Canons, OSGOD and

ATHELRIC, with torches. They turn over the dead bodies and examine them as they pass.

Osgod. I think that this is Thurd-kill.

Athelric. More likely Godric.

Osgod. I am sure this body
 Is Alfwig, the king's uncle.

Athelric. So it is!
 No, no—brave Gurth, one gash from brow to knee!

Osgod. And here is Leofwin.
Edith. And here is He!

Aldwyth. Harold? Oh no—nay,
 if it were—my God,

They have so main'd and murder'd all his face

There is no man can swear to him.

Edith. But one woman!
 Look you, we never mean to part again.

I have found him, I am happy.
 Was there not someone ask'd me for forgiveness?

I yield it freely, being the true wife
 Of this dead King, who never bore revenge.

Enter COUNT WILLIAM and WILLIAM MALET.

William. Who be these women?
 And what body is this?

Edith. Harold, thy better!
William. Ay, and what art thou?

Edith. His wife!
Malet. Not true, my girl, here is the Queen! [*Pointing out Aldwyth.*]

William (to Aldwyth). Wast thou his Queen?

Aldwyth. I was the Queen of Wales.

William. Why then of England.
 Madam, fear us not.

(*To Malet.*) Knowest thou this other?

Malet. When I visited England,
 Some held she was his wife in secret—some—

Well—some believed she was his paramour.

Edith. Norman, thou liest! liars
 all of you,
 Your Saints and all! I am his wife!
 and she—

For look, our marriage ring!
 [*She draws it off the finger of Harold.*]

I lost it somehow—

I lost it, playing with it when I was wild.

That bred the doubt! but I am wiser now . . .

I am too wise . . . Will none among you all

Bear me true witness—only for this once—

That I have found it here again?

[She puts it on.]

And thou, Thy wife am I for ever and evermore.

[Falls on the body and dies.]

William. Death!—and enough of death for this one day,

The day of St. Calixtus, and the day, My day when I was born.

Malet. And this dead king's Who, king or not, hath kinglike fought and fallen,

His birthday, too. It seems but yester-even

I held it with him in his English halls, His day, with all his roof-tree ringing

'Harold,' Before he fell into the snare of Guy;

When all men counted Harold would be king,

And Harold was most happy.

William. Thou art half English. Take them away!

Malet, I vow to build a church to God

Here on the hill of battle; let our high altar

Stand where their standard fell . . . where these two lie.

Take them away, I do not love to see them.

Pluck the dead woman off the dead man, Malet!

Malet. Faster than ivy. Must I hack her arms off?

How shall I part them?

William. Leave them. Let them be!

Bury him and his paramour together. He that was false in oath to me, it seems

Was false to his own wife. We will not give him

A Christian burial: yet he was a warrior,

And wise, yea truthful, till that blighted vow

Which God avenged to-day.

Wrap them together in a purple cloak

And lay them both upon the waste seashore

At Hastings, there to guard the land for which

He did forswear himself—a warrior—ay,

And but that Holy Peter fought for us,

And that the false Northumbrian held aloof,

And save for that chance arrow which the Saints

Sharpen'd and sent against him—who can tell?—

Three horses had I slain beneath me: twice

I thought that all was lost. Since I knew battle,

And that was from my boyhood, never yet—

No, by the splendor of God—have I fought men

Like Harold and his brethren, and his guard

Of English. Every man about his king

Fell where he stood. They loved him: and, pray God

My Normans may but move as true with me

To the door of death. Of one self-stock at first,

Make them again one people—Norman, English;

And English, Norman; we should have a hand

To grasp the world with, and a foot to stamp it . . .

Flat. Praise the Saints. It is over. No more blood!

I am king of England, so they thwart me not,

And I will rule according to their laws.

(To Aldwyth.) Madam, we will entreat thee with all honor.

Aldwyth. My punishment is more than I can bear.

BECKET.

TO THE LORD CHANCELLOR,
THE RIGHT HONORABLE EARL OF SELBORNE.

MY DEAR SELBORNE—To you, the honored Chancellor of our own day, I dedicate this dramatic memorial of your great predecessor ;—which, altho' not intended in its present form to meet the exigencies of our modern theatre, has nevertheless—for so you have assured me—won your approbation.—Ever yours,
TENNYSON.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

HENRY II. (*son of the Earl of Anjou*).
THOMAS BECKET, *Chancellor of England, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury*.
GILBERT FOLIOT, *Bishop of London*.
ROGER, *Archbishop of York*.
 Bishop of Hereford.
HILARY, *Bishop of Chichester*.
JOCELYN, *Bishop of Salisbury*.
JOHN OF SALISBURY } *friends of Becket*.
HERBERT OF BUSHAM }
WALTER MAU, *reputed author of 'Goliath,' Latin poems against the priesthood*.
KING LOUIS OF FRANCE.
GEOFFREY, *son of Rosamund and Henry*.
GRIM, *a monk of Cambridge*.
SIR REGINALD FITZURSE }
SIR RICHARD DE BRITO } *the four knights of the King's household, enemies of*
SIR WILLIAM DE TRACY } *Becket.*
SIR HUGH DE MORVILLE }
DE BROC OF SALTWOOD CASTLE.
LORD LEICESTER.
PHILIP DE ELEMOSYNA.
TWO KNIGHT TEMPLARS.
JOHN OF OXFORD (*called the Swearer*).
ELEANOR OF AQUITAINE, *Queen of England (divorced from Louis of France)*.
ROSAMUND DE CLIFFORD.
MARGERIE.

Knights, Monks, Beggars, etc.

PROLOGUE.

A Castle in Normandy. Interior of the Hall. Roofs of a City seen thro' Windows.

HENRY and BECKET at chess.

Henry. So then our good Archbishop Theobald
Lies dying.

Becket. I am grieved to know as much.

Henry. But we must have a mightier man than he
For his successor.

Becket. Have you thought of one?
Henry. A cleric lately poison'd
his own mother,
And being brought before the courts
of the Church,
They but degraded him. I hope they
whipt him.

I would have hang'd him.

Becket. It is your move.

Henry. Well—there. [*Moves.*]

The Church in the pell-mell of Stephen's time
Hath climb'd the throne and almost clutch'd the crown;
But by the royal customs of our realm

The Church should hold her baronies of me,

Like other lords amenable to law.

I'll have them written down and made the law.

Becket. My liege, I move my bishop.

Henry. And if I live,
No man without my leave shall ex-communicate

My tenants or my household.

Becket. Look to your king.

Henry. No man without my leave shall cross the seas

To set the Pope against me—I pray your pardon.

Becket. Well—will you move?

Henry. There. [*Moves.*

Becket. Check—you move so wildly.

Henry. There then! [*Moves.*

Becket. Why—there then, for you see my bishop

Hath brought your king to a standstill. You are beaten.

Henry (kicks over the board). Why, there then—down go bishop and king together.

I loathe being beaten; had I fixt my fancy

Upon the game I should have beaten thee,

But that was vagabond.

Becket. Where, my liege? With Phryne,

Or Lais, or thy Rosamund, or another?

Henry. My Rosamund is no Lais, Thomas Becket;

And yet she plagues me too—no fault in her—

But that I fear the Queen would have her life.

Becket. Put her away, put her away, my liege!

Put her away into a nunnery!

Safe enough there from her to whom thou art bound

By Holy Church. And wherefore should she seek

The life of Rosamund de Clifford more

Than that of other paramours of thine?

Henry. How dost thou know I am not wedded to her?

Becket. How should I know?

Henry. That is my secret, Thomas.

Becket. State secrets should be patent to the statesman

Who serves and loves his king, and whom the king

Loves not as statesman, but true lover and friend.

Henry. Come, come, thou art but deacon, not yet bishop,

No, nor archbishop, nor my confessor yet.

I would to God thou wert, for I should find

An easy father confessor in thee.

Becket. St. Denis, that thou shouldst not. I should beat

Thy kingship as my bishop hath beaten it.

Henry. Hell take thy bishop then, and my kingship too!

Come, come, I love thee and I know thee, I know thee,

A doter on white pheasant-flesh at feasts,

A sauce-deviser for thy days of fish,

A dish-designer, and most amorous Of good old red sound liberal Gascon

wine:

Will not thy body rebel, man, if thou flatter it?

Becket. That palate is insane which cannot tell

A good dish from a bad, new wine from old.

Henry. Well, who loves wine loves woman.

Becket. So I do.

Men are God's trees, and women are God's flowers;

And when the Gascon wine mounts to my head,

The trees are all the statelier, and the flowers

Are all the fairer.

Henry. And thy thoughts, thy fancies?

Becket. Good dogs, my liege, well train'd, and easily call'd Off from the game.

Henry. Save for some once or twice,

When they ran down the game and worried it.

Becket. No, my liege, no!—not once—in God's name, no!

Henry. Nay, then, I take thee at thy word—believe thee

The veriest Galahad of old Arthur's hall.

And so this Rosamund, my true heart-wife,

Not Eleanor—she whom I love indeed

As a woman should be loved—Why dost thou smile

So dolorously?

Becket. My good liege, if a man Wastes himself among women, how should he love

A woman, as a woman should be loved?

Henry. How shouldst thou know that never hast loved one?

Come, I would give her to thy care in England

When I am out in Normandy or Anjou.

Becket. My lord, I am your subject, not your—

Henry. Pander.

God's eyes! I know all that—not my purveyor

Of pleasures, but to save a life—her life;

Ay, and the soul of Eleanor from hell-fire.

I have built a secret bower in England, Thomas,

A nest in a bush.

Becket. And where, my liege?

Henry (*whispers*). Thine ear.

Becket. That's lone enough.

Henry (*laying paper on table*). This chart here mark'd 'Her Bower,'

Take, keep it, friend. See, first, a circling wood,

A hundred pathways running every-way,

And then a brook, a bridge; and after that

This labyrinthine brickwork maze in maze,

And then another wood, and in the midst

A garden and my Rosamund. Look, this line—

The rest you see is color'd green—but this

Draws thro' the chart to her.

Becket. This blood-red line?

Henry. Ay! blood, perchance, except thou see to her.

Becket. And where is she? There in her English nest?

Henry. Would God she were—no, here within the city.

We take her from her secret bower in Anjou

And pass her to her secret bower in England.

She is ignorant of all but that I love her.

Becket. My liege, I pray thee let me hence: a widow

And orphan child, whom one of thy wild barons—

Henry. Ay, ay, but swear to see to her in England.

Becket. Well, well, I swear, but not to please myself.

Henry. Whatever come between us?

Becket. What should come Between us, Henry?

Henry. Nay—I know not, Thomas.

Becket. What need then? Well—whatever come between us.

[*Going.*]

Henry. A moment! thou didst help me to my throne

In Theobald's time, and after by thy wisdom

Hast kept it firm from shaking; but now I,

For my realm's sake, myself must be the wizard

To raise that tempest which will set it
trembling
Only to base it deeper. I, true son
Of Holy Church—no croucher to the
Gregories

That tread the kings their children
underheel—

Must curb her; and the Holy Father,
while

This Barbarossa butts him from his
chair,

Will need my help—be facile to my
hands.

Now is my time. Yet—lest there
should be flashes

And fulminations from the side of
Rome,

An interdict on England—I will have
My young son Henry crown'd the
King of England,

That so the Papal bolt may pass by
England,

As seeming his, not mine, and fall
abroad.

I'll have it done—and now.

Becket. Surely too young
Even for this shadow of a crown; and
tho'

I love him heartily, I can spy al-
ready

A strain of hard and headstrong in
him. Say,

The Queen should play his kingship
against thine!

Henry. I will not think so,
Thomas. Who shall crown
him?

Canterbury is dying.

Becket. The next Canterbury.

Henry. And who shall he be, my
friend Thomas? Who?

Becket. Name him; the Holy
Father will confirm him.

*Henry (lays his hand on Becket's
shoulder).* Here!

Becket. Mock me not. I am not
even a monk.

Thy jest—no more. Why—look—is
this a sleeve

For an archbishop?

Henry. But the arm within
Is Becket's, who hath beaten down
my foes.

Becket. A soldier's, not a spiritual
arm.

Henry. I lack a spiritual soldier,
Thomas—

A man of this world and the next to
boot.

Becket. There's Gilbert Foliot.

Henry. He! too thin, too thin.
Thou art the man to fill out the
Church robe;

Your Foliot fasts and fawns too much
for me.

Becket. Roger of York.

Henry. Roger is Roger of York.
King, Church, and State to him but
foils wherein

To set that precious jewel, Roger of
York.

No.

Becket. Henry of Winchester?

Henry. Him who crown'd Stephen
—King Stephen's brother!

No; too royal for me.

And I'll have no more Anselms.

Becket. Sire, the business
Of thy whole kingdom waits me: let
me go.

Henry. Answer me first.

Becket. Then for thy barren jest
Take thou mine answer in bare com-
monplace—

Nolo episcopari.

Henry. Ay, but *Nolo
Archiepiscopari*, my good friend,
Is quite another matter.

Becket. A more awful one.
Make *me* archbishop! Why, my
liege, I know

Some three or four poor priests a
thousand times

Fitter for this grand function. *Me*
archbishop!

God's favor and king's favor might
so clash

That thou and I— That were a jest
indeed!

Henry. Thou angerest me, man: I
do not jest.

*Enter ELEANOR and SIR REGINALD
FITZURSE.*

Eleanor (singing). Over! the
sweet summer closes,

The reign of the roses is done—
Henry (to Becket, who is going).

Thou shalt not go. I have not
 ended with thee.

Eleanor (seeing chart on table).
 This chart with the red line! her
 bower! whose bower?

Henry. The chart is not mine, but
 Becket's: take it, Thomas.

Eleanor. Becket! O—ay—and
 these chessmen on the floor—the
 king's crown broken! Becket hath
 beaten thee again—and thou hast
 kicked down the board. I know
 thee of old.

Henry. True enough, my mind
 was set upon other matters.

Eleanor. What matters?—State
 matters? love matters?

Henry. My love for thee, and thine
 for me.

Eleanor. Over! the sweet summer
 closes,

The reign of the roses is done;
 Over and gone with the roses,
 And over and gone with the sun.

Here; but our sun in Aquitaine
 lasts longer. I would I were in Aquitaine
 again—your north chills me.

Over! the sweet summer closes,
 And never a flower at the close;
 Over and gone with the roses,
 And winter again and the snows.

That was not the way I ended it first
 —but unsymmetrically, preposterously,
 illogically, out of passion, without
 art—like a song of the people.
 Will you have it? The last Parthian
 shaft of a forlorn Cupid at the King's
 left breast, and all left-handedness
 and under-handedness.

And never a flower at the close,
 Over and gone with the roses,
 Not over and gone with the rose.

True, one rose will outblossom the
 rest, one rose in a bower. I speak
 after my fancies, for I am a Troubadour,
 you know, and won the violet at
 Toulouse; but my voice is harsh
 here, not in tune, a nightingale out of

season; for marriage, rose or no
 rose, has killed the golden violet.

Becket. Madam, you do ill to scorn
 wedded love.

Eleanor. So I do. Louis of
 France loved me, and I dreamed that
 I loved Louis of France: and I loved
 Henry of England, and Henry of
 England dreamed that he loved me;
 but the marriage-garland withers even
 with the putting on, the bright link
 rusts with the breath of the first after-
 marriage kiss, the harvest moon is the
 ripening of the harvest, and the honey-
 moon is the gall of love; he dies of
 his honeymoon. I could pity this
 poor world myself that it is no better
 ordered.

Henry. Dead is he, my Queen?
 What, altogether? Let me swear nay
 to that by this cross on thy neck.
 God's eyes! what a lovely cross!
 What jewels!

Eleanor. Doth it please you?
 Take it and wear it on that hard heart
 of yours—there. [*Gives it to him.*]

Henry (puts it on). On this left
 breast before so hard a heart,
 To hide the scar left by thy Parthian
 dart.

Eleanor. Has my simple song set
 you jingling? Nay, if I took and
 translated that hard heart into our
 Provençal facilities, I could so play
 about it with the rhyme—

Henry. That the heart were lost
 in the rhyme and the matter in the
 metre. May we not pray you, Madam,
 to spare us the hardness of your facility?

Eleanor. The wells of Castaly are
 not wasted upon the desert. We did
 but jest.

Henry. There's no jest on the
 brows of Herbert there. What is it,
 Herbert?

Enter HERBERT OF BOSHAM.

Herbert. My liege, the good Arch-
 bishop is no more.

Henry. Peace to his soul!

Herbert. I left him with peace on

his face—that sweet other-world smile, which will be reflected in the spiritual body among the angels. But he longed much to see your Grace and the Chancellor ere he past, and his last words were a commendation of Thomas Becket to your Grace as his successor in the archbishopric.

Henry. Ha, Becket! thou rememberest our talk!

Becket. My heart is full of tears—I have no answer.

Henry. Well, well, old men must die, or the world would grow mouldy, would only breed the past again. Come to me to-morrow. Thou hast but to hold out thy hand. Meanwhile the revenues are mine. A-hawking, a-hawking! If I sit, I grow fat. [*Leaps over the table and exit.*]

Becket. He did prefer me to the chancellorship, Believing I should ever aid the Church—

But have I done it? He commends me now

From out his grave to this archbishopric.

Herbert. A dead man's dying wish should be of weight.

Becket. His should. Come with me. Let me learn at full The manner of his death, and all he said.

[*Exeunt Herbert and Becket.*]

Eleanor. Fitzurse, that chart with the red line—thou sawest it—her bower.

Fitzurse. Rosamund's?

Eleanor. Ay—there lies the secret of her whereabouts, and the King gave it to his Chancellor.

Fitzurse. To this son of a London merchant—how your Grace must hate him.

Eleanor. Hate him? as brave a soldier as Henry and a goodlier man: but thou—dost thou love this Chancellor, that thou hast sworn a voluntary allegiance to him?

Fitzurse. Not for my love toward him, but because he had the love of the King. How should a baron love

a beggar on horseback, with the retinue of three kings behind him, outroyalling royalty? Besides, he help the King to break down our castles, for the which I hate him.

Eleanor. For the which I honor him. Statesman not Churchman he. A great and sound policy that: I could embrace him for it: you could not see the King for the kinglings.

Fitzurse. Ay, but he speaks to a noble as tho' he were a churl, and to a churl as if he were a noble.

Eleanor. Pride of the plebeian!

Fitzurse. And this plebeian like to be Archbishop!

Eleanor. True, and I have an inherited loathing of these black sheep of the Papacy. Archbishop? I can see further into a man than our hot-headed Henry, and if there ever come feud between Church and Crown, and I do not then charm this secret out of our loyal Thomas, I am not Eleanor.

Fitzurse. Last night I followed a woman in the city here. Her face was veiled, but the back methought was Rosamund—his paramour, thy rival. I can feel for thee.

Eleanor. Thou feel for me!—paramour—rival! King Louis had no paramours, and I loved him none the more. Henry had many, and I loved him none the less—now neither more nor less—not at all; the cup's empty. I would she were but his paramour, for men tire of their fancies; but I fear this one fancy hath taken root, and borne blossom too, and she, whom the King loves indeed, is a power in the State. Rival!—ay, and when the King passes, there may come a crash and embroilment as in Stephen's time; and her children—canst thou not—that secret matter which would heat the King against thee [*whispers him and he starts*]. Nay, that is safe with me as with thyself: but canst thou not—thou art drowned in debt—thou shalt have our love, our silence, and our gold—canst



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thou not—if thou light upon her—free me from her?

Fitzurse. Well, Madam, I have loved her in my time.

Eleanor. No, my bear, thou hast not. My Courts of Love would have held thee guiltless of love—the fine attractions and repulses, the delicacies, the subtleties.

Fitzurse. Madam, I loved according to the main purpose and intent of nature.

Eleanor. I warrant thee! thou wouldst hug thy Cupid till his ribs cracked—enough of this. Follow me this Rosamund day and night, whithersoever she goes; track her, if thou canst, even into the King's lodging, that I may (*clenches her fist*)—may at least have my cry against him and her,—and thou in thy way shouldst be jealous of the King, for thou in thy way didst once, what shall I call it, affect her thine own self.

Fitzurse. Ay, but the young colt winced and whinnied and flung up her heels; and then the King came honeying about her, and this Becket, her father's friend, like enough staved us from her.

Eleanor. Us!

Fitzurse. Yea, by the Blessed Virgin! There were more than I buzzing round the blossom—De Tracy—even that flint De Brito.

Eleanor. Carry her off among you; run in upon her and devour her, one and all of you; make her as hateful to herself and to the King, as she is to me.

Fitzurse. I and all would be glad to wreak our spite on the rosefaced minion of the King, and bring her to the level of the dust, so that the King—

Eleanor. Let her eat it like the serpent, and be driven out of her paradise.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—BECKET'S HOUSE IN LONDON.

Chamber barely furnished. BECKET *unrobing.* HERBERT OF BOSHAM and SERVANT.

Servant. Shall I not help your lordship to your rest?

Becket. Friend, am I so much better than thyself?

That thou shouldst help me? Thou art wearied out.

With this day's work, get thee to thine own bed.

Leave me with Herbert, friend.

[*Exit Servant.*
Help me off, Herbert, with this—and this.

Herbert. Was not the people's blessing as we past?

Heart-comfort and a balsam to thy blood?

Becket. The people know their Church a tower of strength.

A bulwark against Throne and Baronage.

Too heavy for me, this; off with it, Herbert!

Herbert. Is it so much heavier than thy Chancellor's robe?

Becket. No; but the Chancellor's and the Archbishop's Together more than mortal man can bear.

Herbert. Not heavier than thine armor at Thoulouse?

Becket. O Herbert, Herbert, in my chancellorship

I more than once have gone against the Church.

Herbert. To please the King?

Becket. Ay, and the King of kings,

Or justice; for it seem'd to me but just

The Church should pay her scutage like the lords.

But hast thou heard this cry of Gilbert Foliot

That I am not the man to be your Primate,

For Henry could not work a miracle—

Make an Archbishop of a soldier?

Herbert. Ay,

For Gilbert Foliot held himself the man.

Becket. Am I the man? My mother, ere she bore me, Dream'd that twelve stars fell glittering out of heaven Into her bosom.

Herbert. Ay, the fire, the light, The spirit of the twelve Apostles enter'd Into thy making.

Becket. And when I was a child, The Virgin, in a vision of my sleep,

Gave me the golden keys of Paradise. Dream,

Or prophecy, that?

Herbert. Well, dream and prophecy both.

Becket. And when I was of Theobald's household, once— The good old man would sometimes have his jest—

He took his mitre off, and set it on me,

And said, 'My young Archbishop— thou wouldst make

A stately Archbishop!' Jest or prophecy there?

Herbert. Both, Thomas, both.

Becket. Am I the man? That rang

Within my head last night, and when I slept

Methought I stood in Canterbury Minster,

And spake to the Lord God, and said, 'O Lord,

I have been a lover of wines, and delicate meats,

And secular splendors, and a favorer Of players, and a courtier, and a feeder

Of dogs and hawks, and apes, and lions, and lynxes.

Am I the man?' And the Lord answer'd me,

'Thou art the man, and all the more the man.'

And then I asked again, 'O Lord my God,

Henry the King hath been my friend, my brother,

And mine uplifter in this world, and chosen me

For this thy great archbishopric, believing

That I should go against the Church with him,

And I shall go against him with the Church,

And I have said no word of this to him:

Am I the man?' And the Lord answer'd me,

'Thou art the man, and all the more the man.'

And thereupon, methought, He drew toward me,

And smote me down upon the Minster floor.

I fell.

Herbert. God make not thee, but thy foes, fall.

Becket. I fell. Why fall? Why did He smite me? What?

Shall I fall off—to please the King once more?

Not fight—tho' somehow traitor to the King—

My truest and mine utmost for the Church?

Herbert. Thou canst not fall that way. Let traitor be;

For how have fought thine utmost for the Church,

Save from the throne of thine archbishopric?

And how been made Archbishop hadst thou told him,

'I mean to fight mine utmost for the Church,

Against the King?'

Becket. But dost thou think the King

Forced mine election?

Herbert. I do think the King Was potent in the election, and why not?

Why should not Heaven have so inspired the King?

Be comforted. Thou art the man—be thou

A mightier Anselm.

Becket. I do believe thee, then. I am the man.

And yet I seem appall'd—on such a sudden

At such an eagle-height I stand and see

The rift that runs between me and the King.

I served our Theobald well when I was with him;

I served King Henry well as Chancellor;

I am his no more, and I must serve the Church.

This Canterbury is only less than Rome,

And all my doubts I fling from me like dust,

Winnow and scatter all scruples to the wind,

And all the puissance of the warrior, And all the wisdom of the Chancellor,

And all the heap'd experiences of life,

I cast upon the side of Canterbury— Our holy mother Canterbury, who sits

With tatter'd robes. Laics and barons, thro'

The random gifts of careless kings, have graspt

Her livings, her advowsons, granges, farms,

And goodly acres—we will make her whole;

Not one rood lost. And for these Royal customs,

These ancient Royal customs—they are Royal,

Not of the Church—and let them be anathema,

And all that speak for them anathema.

Herbert. Thomas, thou art moved too much.

Becket. O Herbert, here I gash myself asunder from the King,

Tho' leaving each, a wound; mine own, a grief

To show the scar for ever—his, a hate

Not ever to be heal'd.

Enter ROSAMUND DE CLIFFORD, flying from SIR REGINALD FITZURSE. Drops her veil.

Becket. Rosamund de Clifford!

Rosamund. Save me, father, hide me—they follow me—and I must not be known.

Becket. Pass in with Herbert there.

[Exeunt Rosamund and Herbert by side door.]

Enter FITZURSE.

Fitzurse. The Archbishop!

Becket. Ay! what wouldst thou, Reginald?

Fitzurse. Why—why, my lord, I follow'd—follow'd one—

Becket. And then what follows? Let me follow thee.

Fitzurse. It much imports me I should know her name.

Becket. What her?

Fitzurse. The woman that I follow'd hither.

Becket. Perhaps it may import her all as much

Not to be known.

Fitzurse. And what care I for that?

Come, come, my lord Archbishop; I saw that door

Close even now upon the woman.

Becket. Well?

Fitzurse (making for the door). Nay, let me pass, my lord, for I must know.

Becket. Back, man!

Fitzurse. Then tell me who and what she is.

Becket. Art thou so sure thou followedst anything?

Go home, and sleep thy wine off, for thine eyes

Glare stupid-wild with wine.

Fitzurse (making to the door). I must and will.

I care not for thy new archbishopric.

Becket. Back, man, I tell thee!

What!

Shall I forget my new archbishopric

And smite thee with my crozier on the skull?

'Fore God, I am a mightier man than thou.

Fitzurse. It well befits thy new
archbishopsric
To take the vagabond woman of the
street
Into thine arms!

Becket. O drunken ribaldry!
Out, beast! out, bear!

Fitzurse. I shall remember this.

Becket. Do, and begone!

[*Exit Fitzurse.*]

[*Going to the door, sees De Tracy.*]

Tracy, what dost thou here?

De Tracy. My lord, I follow'd

Reginald Fitzurse.

Becket. Follow him out!

De Tracy. I shall remember this
Discourtesy. [*Exit.*]

Becket. Do. These be those
baron-brutes

That havock'd all the land in
Stephen's day.

Rosamund de Clifford.

Re-enter ROSAMUND and HERBERT.

Rosamund. Here am I.

Becket. Why here?

We gave thee to the charge of John
of Salisbury,

To pass thee to thy secret bower to-
morrow.

Wast thou not told to keep thyself
from sight?

Rosamund. Poor bird of passage!
so I was; but, father,

They say that you are wise in winged
things,

And know the ways of Nature. Bar
the bird

From following the fled summer—a
chink—he's out,

Gone! And there stole into the city
a breath

Full of the meadows, and it minded
me

Of the sweet woods of Clifford, and
the walks

Where I could move at pleasure, and
I thought

Lo! I must out or die.

Becket. Or out and die.

And what hast thou to do with this
Fitzurse?

Rosamund. Nothing. He sued
my hand. I shook at him.

He found me once alone. Nay—nay
—I cannot

Tell you: my father drove him and
his friends,

De Tracy and De Brito, from our
castle.

I was but fourteen and an April
then.

I heard him swear revenge.

Becket. Why will you court it
By self-exposure? flutter out at
night?

Make it so hard to save a moth from
the fire?

Rosamund. I have saved many of
'em. You catch 'em, so,

Softly, and fling them out to the free
air.

They burn themselves *within-door*.

Becket. Our good John
Must speed you to your bower at
once. The child

Is there already.

Rosamund. Yes—the child—the
child—

O rare, a whole long day of open field.

Becket. Ay, but you go disguised.

Rosamund. O rare again!
We'll baffle them. I warrant. What
shall it be?

I'll go as a nun.

Becket. No.

Rosamund. What, not good enough
Even to play at nun?

Becket. Dan John with a nun,
That Map, and these new railers at
the Church

May plaister his clean name with
scurrilous rhymes!

No!

Go like a monk, cowling and clouding
up

That fatal star, thy Beauty, from the
squint

Of lust and glare of malice. Good
night! good night!

Rosamund. Father, I am so tender
to all hardness!

Nay, father, first thy blessing.

Becket. Wedded?

Rosamund. Father!

Becket. Well, well! I ask no more. Heaven bless thee! hence!

Rosamund. O, holy father, when thou seest him next, Commend me to thy friend.

Becket. What friend?

Rosamund. The King.

Becket. Herbert, take out a score of armed men

To guard this bird of passage to her cage;

And watch Fitzurse, and if he follow thee,

Make him thy prisoner. I am Chancellor yet.

[*Exeunt Herbert and Rosamund.*]

Poor soul! poor soul!

My friend, the King! . . . O thou Great Seal of England,

Given me by my dear friend the King of England—

We long have wrought together, thou and I—

Now must I send thee as a common friend

To tell the King, my friend, I am against him.

We are friends no more: he will say that, not I.

The worldly bond between us is dissolved,

Not yet the love: can I be under him

As Chancellor? as Archbishop over him?

Go therefore like a friend slighted by one

That hath climb'd up to nobler company.

Not slighted—all but moan'd for: thou must go.

I have not dishonor'd thee—I trust I have not;

Not mangled justice. May the hand that next

Inherits thee be but as true to thee As mine hath been! O, my dear

friend, the King!

O brother!—I may come to martyrdom.

I am martyr in myself already.—Herbert!

Herbert (re-entering). My lord, the town is quiet, and the moon Divides the whole long street with light and shade.

No footfall—no Fitzurse. We have seen her home.

Becket. The hog hath tumbled himself into some corner,

Some ditch, to snore away his drunkenness

Into the sober headache,—Nature's moral

Against excess. Let the Great Seal be sent

Back to the King to-morrow.

Herbert. Must that be? The King may rend the bearer limb

from limb.

Becket. Against the moral excess

No physical ache, but failure it may be

Of all we aim'd at. John of Salisbury

Hath often laid a cold hand on my heats,

And Herbert hath rebuked me even now.

I will be wise and wary, not the soldier

As Foliot swears it.—John, and out of breath!

Enter JOHN OF SALISBURY.

John of Salisbury. Thomas, thou wast not happy taking charge

Of this wild Rosamund to please the King,

Nor am I happy having charge of her—

The included Danaë has escaped again

Her tower, and her Acrisius—where to seek?

I have been about the city.

Becket. Thou wilt find her Back in her lodging. Go with her—

at once—

To-night—my men will guard you to the gates.

Be sweet to her, she has many enemies.

Send the Great Seal by daybreak.
Both, good night!

SCENE II.—STREET IN NORTH-AMPTON LEADING TO THE CASTLE.

ELEANOR'S RETAINERS and BECKET'S RETAINERS fighting. Enter ELEANOR and BECKET from opposite streets.

Eleanor. Peace, fools!

Becket. Peace, friends! what idle brawl is this?

Retainer of Becket. They said—her Grace's people—thou wast found—

Liars! I shame to quote 'em—caught, my lord,

With a wanton in thy lodging—Hell requite 'em!

Retainer of Eleanor. My liege, the Lord Fitzurse reported this in passing to the Castle even now.

Retainer of Becket. And then they mock'd us and we fell upon 'em,

For we would live and die for thee, my lord,

However kings and queens may frown on thee.

Becket to his Retainers. Go, go—no more of this!

Eleanor to her Retainers. Away!—
(*Exeunt Retainers*) Fitzurse—

Becket. Nay, let him be.

Eleanor. No, no, my Lord Archbishop,

'Tis known you are midwinter to all women,

But often in your chancellorship you served

The follies of the King.

Becket. No, not these follies!

Eleanor. My lord, Fitzurse beheld her in your lodging.

Becket. Whom?

Eleanor. Well—you know—the minion, Rosamund.

Becket. He had good eyes!

Eleanor. Then hidden in the street

He watch'd her pass with John of Salisbury
And heard her cry 'Where is this bower of mine?'

Becket. Good ears too!

Eleanor. You are going to the Castle,

Will you subscribe the customs?

Becket. I leave that,
Knowing how much you reverence Holy Church,

My liege, to your conjecture.

Eleanor. I and mine—
And many a baron holds along with me—

Are not so much at feud with Holy Church

But we might take your side against the customs—

So that you grant me one slight favor.

Becket. What?

Eleanor. A sight of that same chart which Henry gave you

With the red line—'her bower.'

Becket. And to what end?

Eleanor. That Church must scorn herself whose fearful Priest sits winking at the license of a king,

Altho' we grant when kings are dangerous

The Church must play into the hands of kings;

Look! I would move this wanton from his sight

And take the Church's danger on myself.

Becket. For which she should be duly grateful.

Eleanor. True!

Tho' she that binds the bond, herself should see

That kings are faithful to their marriage vow.

Becket. Ay, Madam, and queens also.

Eleanor. And queens also! What is your drift?

Becket. My drift is to the Castle, Where I shall meet the Barons and my King. [*Exit.*]

DE BROC, DE TRACY, DE BRITO,
DE MORVILLE (*passing*).

Eleanor. To the Castle?

De Broc. Ay!

Eleanor. Stir up the King, the
Lords!

Set all on fire against him!

De Brito. Ay, good Madam!

[*Exeunt.*]

Eleanor. Fool! I will make thee
hateful to thy King.

Churl! I will have thee frighted into
France,

And I shall live to trample on thy
grave.

SCENE III.—THE HALL IN
NORTHAMPTON CASTLE.

*On one side of the stage the doors of an
inner Council-chamber, half-open.*

At the bottom, the great doors of the

Hall. ROGER ARCHBISHOP OF

YORK, FOLIOT BISHOP OF LON-

DON, HILARY OF CHICHESTER,

BISHOP OF HEREFORD, RICHARD

DE HASTINGS (Grand Prior of

Templars), PHILIP DE ELEEMOSYNA

(The Pope's Almoner), and others.

DE BROC, FITZURSE, DE BRITO,

DE MORYILLE, DE TRACY, and

other BARONS assembled—a table

before them. JOHN OF OXFORD,

President of the Council.

*Enter BECKET and HERBERT
OF BOSHAM.*

Becket. Where is the King?

Roger of York. Gone hawking on
the Nene,

His heart so gall'd with thine ingrati-
tude,

He will not see thy face till thou hast
sign'd

These ancient laws and customs of
the realm.

Thy sending back the Great Seal
madden'd him,

He all but pluck'd the bearer's eyes
away.

Take heed, lest he destroy thee
utterly.

Becket. Then shalt thou step into
my place and sign.

Roger of York. Didst thou not pro-
mise Henry to obey

These ancient laws and customs of
the realm?

Becket. Saving the honor of my
order—ay.

Customs, traditions,—clouds that
come and go;

The customs of the Church are Peter's
rock.

Roger of York. Saving thine order!

But King Henry sware

That, saving his King's kingship, he
would grant thee

The crown itself. Saving thine or-
der, Thomas,

Is black and white at once, and comes
to nought.

O bolster'd up with stubbornness and
pride,

Wilt thou destroy the Church in
fighting for it,

And bring us all to shame?

Becket. Roger of York,

When I and thou were youths in
Theobald's house,

Twice did thy malice and thy calum-
nies

Exile me from the face of Theobald.

Now I am Canterbury and thou art
York.

Roger of York. And is not York
the peer of Canterbury?

Did not Great Gregory bid St. Austin
here

Found two archbishoprics, London
and York?

Becket. What came of that? The
first archbishop fled,

And York lay barren for a hundred
years.

Why, by this rule, Foliot may clam
the pall

For London too.

Foliot. And with good reason too,
For London had a temple and a

priest

When Canterbury hardly bore a
name.

Becket. The pagan temple of a
pagan Rome!
The heathen priesthood of a heathen
creed!

Thou goest beyond thyself in petu-
lancy!

Who made thee London? Who, but
Canterbury?

John of Oxford. Peace, peace, my
lords! these customs are no
longer

As Canterbury calls them, wandering
clouds,

But by the King's command are writ-
ten down,

And by the King's command I, John
of Oxford,

The President of this Council, read
them.

Becket. Read!

John of Oxford (reads). 'All
causes of advowsons and presenta-
tions, whether between laymen or
clerics, shall be tried in the King's
court.'

Becket. But that I cannot sign:
for that would drag

The cleric before the civil judgment-
seat,

And on a matter wholly spiritual.

John of Oxford. 'If any cleric be
accused of felony, the Church shall
not protect him; but he shall answer
to the summons of the King's court
to be tried therein.'

Becket. And that I cannot sign.
Is not the Church the visible Lord
on earth?

Shall hands that do create the Lord
be bound

Behind the back like laymen-crimi-
nals?

The Lord be judged again by Pilate?
No!

John of Oxford. 'When a bishop-
ric falls vacant, the King, till another
be appointed, shall receive the rev-
enues thereof.'

Becket. And that I cannot sign:
Is the King's treasury

A fit place for the monies of the
Church,

That be the patrimony of the poor?

John of Oxford. 'And when the
vacancy is to be filled up, the King
shall summon the chapter of that
church to court, and the election
shall be made in the Chapel Royal,
with the consent of our lord the King,
and by the advice of his Government.'

Becket. And that I cannot sign?
for that would make

Our island-Church a schism from
Christendom,

And weight down all free choice be-
neath the throne.

Foliot. And was thine own election
so canonical,

Good father?

Becket. If it were not, Gilbert
Foliot,

I mean to cross the sea to France,
and lay

My crozier in the Holy Father's
hands,

And bid him re-create me, Gilbert
Foliot.

Foliot. Nay; by another of these
customs thou

Wilt not be suffer'd so to cross the
seas

Without the license of our lord the
King.

Becket. That, too, I cannot sign.

DE BROC, DE BRITO, DE
TRACY, FITZURSE, DE MOR-
VILLE, *start up—a clash of
swords.*

Sign and obey!

Becket. My lords, is this a combat
or a council?

Are ye my masters, or my lord the
King?

Ye make this clashing for no love o'
the customs

Or constitutions, or whate'er ye call
them,

But that there be among you those
that hold

Lands reft from Canterbury.

De Broc. And mean to keep them,
In spite of thee!

Lords (shouting). Sign, and obey
the crown!

Becket. The crown? Shall I do less for Canterbury Than Henry for the crown? King Stephen gave Many of the crown lands to those that helped him; So did Matilda, the King's mother. Mark, When Henry came into his own again, Then he took back not only Stephen's gifts, But his own mother's, lest the crown should be Shorn of ancestral splendor. This did Henry. Shall I do less for mine own Canterbury? And thou, De Broc, that holdest Saltwood Castle—

De Broc. And mean to hold it, or—

Becket. To have my life.

De Broc. The King is quick to anger; if thou anger him, We wait but the King's word to strike thee dead.

Becket. Strike, and I die the death of martyrdom; Strike, and ye set these customs by my death Ringing their own death-knell thro' all the realm.

Herbert. And I can tell you, lords, ye are all as like To lodge a fear in Thomas Becket's heart As find a hare's form in a lion's cave.

John of Oxford. Ay, sheathe your swords, ye will displease the King.

De Broc. Why down then thou! but an he come to Saltwood, By God's death, thou shalt stick him like a calf!

[*Sheathing his sword.*]

Hilary. O my good lord, I do entreat thee—sign. Save the King's honor here before his barons.

He hath sworn that thou shouldst sign, and now but shuns

The semblance of defeat; I have heard him say He means no more; so if thou sign, my lord, That were but as the shadow of an assent.

Becket. 'Twould seem too like the substance, if I sign'd.

Philip de Eleemosyna. My lord, thine ear! I have the ear of the Pope.

As thou hast honor for the Pope our master,

Have pity on him, sorely prest upon By the fierce Emperor and his Antipope.

Thou knowest he was forced to fly to France;

He pray'd me to pray thee to pacify Thy King; for if thou go against thy King,

Then must he likewise go against thy King,

And then thy King might join the Antipope,

And that would shake the Papacy as it stands.

Besides, thy King swore to our cardinals

He meant no harm nor damage to the Church.

Smoothe thou his pride—thy signing is but form;

Nay, and should harm come of it, it is the Pope

Will be to blame—not thou. Over and over

He told me thou shouldst pacify the King,

Lest there be battle between Heaven and Earth,

And Earth should get the better—for the time.

Cannot the Pope absolve thee if thou sign?

Becket. Have I the orders of the Holy Father?

Philip de Eleemosyna. Orders, my lord—why, no; for what am I? The secret whisper of the Holy Father.

Thou, that hast been a statesman, couldst thou always

Blurt thy free mind to the air?

Becket. If Rome be feeble, then should I be firm.

Philip. Take it not that way—balk not the Pope's will.

When he hath shaken off the Emperor,

He heads the Church against the King with thee.

Richard de Hastings (kneeling). Becket, I am the oldest of the Templars;

I knew thy father; he would be mine age

Had he lived now; think of me as thy father!

Behold thy father kneeling to thee, Becket.

Submit; I promise thee on my salvation

That thou wilt hear no more o' the customs.

Becket. What!

Hath Henry told thee? hast thou talk'd with him?

Another Templar (kneeling). Father, I am the youngest of the Templars,

Look on me as I were thy bodily son, For, like a son, I lift my hands to thee.

Philip. Wilt thou hold out for ever, Thomas Becket?

Dost thou not hear?

Becket (signs). Why—there then—there—I sign,

And swear to obey the customs.

Foliot. Is it thy will,

My lord Archbishop, that we too should sign?

Becket. O ay, by that canonical obedience

Thou still hast owed thy father, Gilbert Foliot.

Foliot. Loyalty and with good faith, my lord Archbishop?

Becket. O ay, with all that loyalty and good faith

Thou still hast shown thy primate, Gilbert Foliot.

[*Becket draws apart with Herbert.*

Herbert, Herbert, have I betray'd the Church?

I'll have the paper back—blot out my name.

Herbert. Too late, my lord: you see they are signing there.

Becket. False to myself—it is the will of God

To break me, prove me nothing of myself!

This Almoner hath tasted Henry's gold.

The cardinals have finger'd Henry's gold.

And Rome is venal ev'n to rottenness. I see it, I see it.

I am no soldier, as he said—at least No leader. Herbert, till I hear from

the Pope

I will suspend myself from all my

functions.

If fast and prayer, the lacerating scourge—

Foliot (from the table). My lord Archbishop, thou hast yet to seal.

Becket. First, Foliot, let me see what I have sign'd. [*Goes to the table.*

What, this! and this!—what! new and old together!

Seal? If a seraph shouted from the sun,

And bad me seal against the rights of the Church,

I would anathematize him. I will not seal. [*Exit with Herbert.*

Enter KING HENRY

Henry. Where's Thomas? hath he sign'd? show me the papers!

Sign'd and not seal'd! How's that?

John of Oxford. He would not seal.

And when he sign'd, his face was stormy-red—

Shame, wrath, I know not what. He sat down there

And dropt it in his hands, and then a paleness,

Like the wan twilight after sunset, crept

Up even to the tonsure, and he groan'd,

'False to myself! It is the will of God!'

Henry. God's will be what it will,
the man shall seal,
Or I will seal his doom. My burgher's son—

Nay, if I cannot break him as the prelate,

I'll crush him as the subject. Send for him back.

[*Sits on his throne.*]

Barons and bishops of our realm of England,

After the nineteen winters of King Stephen—

A reign which was no reign, when none could sit

By his own hearth in peace; when murder common

As nature's death, like Egypt's plague, had fill'd

All things with blood; when every doorway blush'd,

Dash'd red with that unhallow'd pass-over;

When every baron ground his blade in blood;

The household dough was kneaded up with blood;

The millwheel turn'd in blood; the wholesome plow

Lay rusting in the furrow's yellow weeds,

Till famine dwarf'd the race—I came, your King!

Nor dwelt alone, like a soft lord of the East,

In mine own hall, and sucking thro' fools' ears

The flatteries of corruption—went abroad

Thro' all my counties, spied my people's ways;

Yea, heard the churl against the baron—yea,

And did him justice; sat in mine own courts

Judging my judges, that had found a King

Who ranged confusions, made the twilight day,

And struck a shape from out the vague, and law

From madness. And the event—our fallows till'd,

Much corn, re-peopled towns, a realm again.

So far my course, albeit not glassy-smooth,

Had prosper'd in the main, but suddenly

Jarr'd on this rock. A cleric violated The daughter of his host, and murder'd him.

Bishops—York, London, Chichester, Westminster—

Ye haled this tinsured devil into your courts;

But since your canon will not let you take

Life for a life, ye but degraded him Where I had hang'd him. What doth hard murder care

For degradation? and that made me muse,

Being bounden by my coronation oath

To do men justice. Look to it, your own selves!

Say that a cleric murder'd an archbishop,

What could ye do? Degrade, imprison him—

Not death for death.

John of Oxford. But I, my liege, could swear,

To death for death.

Henry. And, looking thro' my reign,

I found a hundred ghastly murders done

By men, the scum and offal of the Church;

Then, glancing thro' the story of this realm,

I came on certain wholesome usages, Lost in desuetude, of my grandsire's day,

Good royal customs—had them written fair

For John of Oxford here to read to you.

John of Oxford. And I can easily swear to these as being

The King's will and God's will and justice; yet

I could but read a part to-day, be-
cause—

Fiturse. Because my lord of Can-
terbury—

De Tracy. Ay,

This Lord of Canterbury—

De Brito. As is his wont
Too much of late whene'er your royal
rights

Are mooted in our councils—

Fiturse. —made an uproar.

Henry. And Becket had my bosom
on all this;

If ever man by bonds of grateful-
ness—

I raised him from the puddle of the
gutter,

I made him porcelain from the clay
of the city—

Thought that I knew him, err'd thro'
love of him,

Hoped, were he chosen archbishop,
Church and Crown,

Two sisters gliding in an equal
dance,

Two rivers gently flowing side by
side—

But no!

The bird that moults sings the same
song again,

The snake that sloughs comes out a
snake again.

Snake—ay, but he that lookt a fang-
less one,

Issues a venomous adder.

For he, when having doff'd the Chan-
cellor's robe—

Fling the Great Seal of England in
my face—

Claim'd some of our crown lands for
Canterbury—

My comrade, boon companion, my
co-reveller,

The master of his master, the King's
king,—

God's eyes! I had meant to make
him all but king.

Chancellor-Archbishop, he might well
have sway'd

All England under Henry, the young
King,

When I was hence. What did the
traitor say?

False to himself, but ten-fold false to
me!

The will of God—why, then it is my
will—

Is he coming?

Messenger (entering). With a crowd
of worshippers,

And holds his cross before him thro'
the crowd,

As one that puts himself in sanctuary.

Henry. His cross!

Roger of York. His cross! I'll
front him, cross to cross.

[*Exit Roger of York.*

Henry. His cross! it is the traitor
that imputes

Treachery to his King!

It is not safe for me to look upon him.
Away—with me!

[*Goes in with his Barons to the
Council-Chamber, the door of
which is left open.*

*Enter BECKET, holding his cross of
silver before him. The BISHOPS
come round him.*

Hereford. The King will not abide
thee with thy cross.

Permit me, my good lord, to bear it
for thee,

Being thy chaplain.

Becket. No: it must protect me.

Herbert. As once he bore the
standard of the Angles,

So now he bears the standard of the
angels.

Foliot. I am the Dean of the prov-
ince: let me bear it.

Make not thy King a traitorous mur-
derer.

Becket. Did not your barons draw
their swords against me?

*Enter ROGER OF YORK, with his
cross, advancing to BECKET.*

Becket. Wherefore dost thou pre-
sume to bear thy cross,

Against the solemn ordinance from
Rome,

Out of thy province?

Roger of York. Why dost thou
presume,

Arm'd with thy cross, to come before
the King?

If Canterbury bring his cross to court,
Let York bear his to mate with Can-
terbury.

*Foliot (seizing hold of Becket's
cross).* Nay, nay, my lord, thou
must not brave the King.

Nay, let me have it. I will have it!

Becket. Away!

[Flinging him off.]

Foliot. He fasts, they say, this
mitred Hercules!

He fast! is that an arm of fast? My
lord,

Hadst thou not sign'd, I had gone
along with thee;

But thou the shepherd hast betray'd
the sheep,

And thou art perjured, and thou wilt
not seal.

As Chancellor thou wast against the
Church,

Now as Archbishop goest against the
King;

For, like a fool, thou knowest no mid-
dle way.

Ay, ay! but art thou stronger than the
King?

Becket. Strong—not in mine own
self, but Heaven; true

To either function, holding it; and
thou

Fast, scourge thyself, and mortify
thy flesh,

Not spirit—thou remainest Gilbert
Foliot,

A worldly follower of the worldly
strong.

I, bearing this great ensign, make it
clear

Under what Prince I fight.

Foliot. My lord of York,

Let us go into the Council, where our
bishops

And our great lords will sit in judg-
ment on him.

Becket. Sons sit in judgment on
their father!—then

The spire of Holy Church may prick
the graves—

Her crypt among the stars. Sign?
seal? I promised

The King to obey these customs, not
yet written,

Saving mine order; true too, that
when written

I sign'd them—being a fool, as Foliot
call'd me.

I hold not by my signing. Get ye
hence,

Tell what I say to the King.

*[Exeunt Hereford, Foliot, and
other Bishops.]*

Roger of York. The Church will
hate thee. *[Exit.]*

Becket. Serve my best friend and
make him my worst foe;

Fight for the Church, and set the
Church against me!

Herbert. To be honest is to set all
knaves against thee.

Ah! Thomas, excommunicate them
all!

Hereford (re-entering). I cannot
brook the turmoil thou hast
raised.

I would, my lord Thomas of Canter-
bury,

Thou wert plain Thomas and not
Canterbury,

Or that thou wouldst deliver Canter-
bury

To our King's hands again, and be at
peace.

Hilary (re-entering). For hath not
thine ambition set the Church

This day between the hammer and the
anvil—

Fealty to the King, obedience to thy-
self?

Herbert. What say the bishops?

Hilary. Some have pleaded for
him,

But the King rages—most are with the
King;

And some are reeds, that one time
sway to the current,

And to the wind another. But we
hold

Thou art foresworn; and no fore-
sworn Archbishop

Shall helm the Church. We there-
fore place ourselves

Under the shield and safeguard of the
Pope,

And cite thee to appear before the
Pope,
And answer thine accusers. . . .
Art thou deaf?

Becket. I hear you. [*Clash of arms.*]

Hilary. Dost thou hear those others?

Becket. Ay!

Roger of York (re-entering). The King's 'God's eyes!' come now so thick and fast,

We fear that we may reave thee of thine own.

Come on, come on! it is not fit for us To see the proud Archbishop mutilated.

Say that he blind thee and tear out thy tongue.

Becket. So be it. He begins at top with me:

They crucified St. Peter downward.

Roger of York. Nay,

But for their sake who stagger betwixt thine

Appeal, and Henry's anger, yield.

Becket. Hence, Satan!

[*Exit Roger of York.*]

Fitsurse (re-entering). My lord, the King demands three hundred marks,

Due from his castles of Berkhamstead and Eye

When thou thereof wast warden.

Becket. Tell the King I spent thrice that in fortifying his castles.

De Tracy (re-entering). My lord, the King demands seven hundred marks,

Lent at the siege of Thoulouse by the King.

Becket. I led seven hundred knights and fought his wars.

De Brilo (re-entering). My lord, the King demands five hundred marks,

Advanced thee at his instance by the Jews,

For which the King was bound security.

Becket. I thought it was a gift; I thought it was a gift.

Enter LORD LEICESTER (followed by BARONS and BISHOPS).

My lord, I come unwillingly. The King

Demands a strict account of all those revenues

From all the vacant sees and abbas-

cies, Which came into thy hands when Chancellor.

Becket. How much might that amount to, my lord Leicester?

Leicester. Some thirty—forty thousand silver marks.

Becket. Are these your customs? O my good lord Leicester,

The King and I were brothers. All I had

I lavish'd for the glory of the King; I shone from him, for him, his glory,

his Reflection: now the glory of the Church

Hath swallow'd up the glory of the King;

I am his no more, but hers. Grant me one day

To ponder these demands.

Leicester. Hear first thy sentence! The King and all his lords—

Becket. Son, first hear me!

Leicester. Nay, nay, canst thou, that holdest thine estates

In fee and barony of the King, decline

The judgment of the King?

Becket. The King! I hold Nothing in fee and barony of the King.

Whatever the Church owns—she holds it in

Free and perpetual alms, unsubject to

One earthly sceptre.

Leicester. Nay, but hear thy judgment.

The King and all his barons—

Becket. Judgment! Barons! Who but the bridegroom dares to judge the bride.

Or he the bridegroom may appoint? Not he

That is not of the house, but from the street
Stain'd with the mire thereof.

I had been so true
To Henry and mine office that the King

Would throne me in the great Archbishopric:

And I, that knew mine own infirmity,
For the King's pleasure rather than God's cause

Took it upon me—err'd thro' love of him.

Now therefore God from me withdraws Himself,
And the King too.

What! forty thousand marks!
Why thou, the King, the Pope, the Saints, the world,

Know that when made Archbishop I was freed,

Before the Prince and chief Justiciary.
From every bond and debt and obligation

Incurr'd as Chancellor.

Hear me, son.

As gold
Outvalues dross, light darkness, Abel Cain,

The soul the body, and the Church the Throne,

I charge thee, upon pain of mine anathema,

That thou obey, not me, but God in me,

Rather than Henry. I refuse to stand
By the King's censure, make my cry to the Pope,

By whom I will be judged; refer myself,

The King, these customs, all the Church, to him,

And under his authority—I depart.

[Going.]

[Leicester looks at him doubtingly.]
Am I a prisoner?

Leicester. By St. Lazarus, no!
I am confounded by thee. Go in peace.

De Broc. In peace now—but after.
Take that for earnest.

[Flings a bone at him from the rushes.]

De Brito, Fitzurse, De Tracy, and others (flinging coils of rushes). Ay, go in peace, caitiff, caitiff! And that too, perjured prelate—and that, turn-coat shaveling! There, there, there! traitor, traitor, traitor!

Becket. Mannerless wolves!

[Turning and facing them.]

Herbert. Enough, my lord, enough!

Becket. Barons of England and of Normandy,

When what ye shake at doth but seem to fly,

True test of coward, ye follow with a yell.

But I that threw the mightiest knight of France,

Sir Engelram de Trie,—

Herbert. Enough, my lord.

Becket. More than enough. I play the fool again.

Enter HERALD.

Herald. The King commands you, upon pain of death,
That none should wrong or injure your Archbishop.

Foliot. Deal gently with the young man Absalom.

[Great doors of the Hall at the back open, and discover a crowd.]

They shout:

Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!

SCENE IV.—REFECTORY OF THE MONASTERY AT NORTHAMPTON.

A banquet on the Tables.

Enter BECKET. BECKET'S RETAINERS.

1st Retainer. Do thou speak first.

2nd Retainer. Nay, thou! Nay, thou! Hast not thou drawn the short straw?

1st Retainer. My lord Archbishop, wilt thou permit us—

Becket. To speak without stammering and like a free man? Ay.

1st Retainer. My lord, permit us then to leave thy service.

Becket. When?

1st Retainer. Now.

Becket. To-night?

1st Retainer. To-night, my lord.

Becket. And why?

1st Retainer. My lord, we leave thee not without tears.

Becket. Tears? Why not stay with me then?

1st Retainer. My lord, we cannot yield thee an answer altogether to thy satisfaction.

Becket. I warrant you, or your own either. Shall I find you one? The King hath frowned upon me.

1st Retainer. That is not altogether our answer, my lord.

Becket. No; yet all but all. Go, go! Ye have eaten of my dish and drunken of my cup for a dozen years.

1st Retainer. And so we have. We mean thee no wrong. Wilt thou not say, 'God bless you,' ere we go?

Becket. God bless you all! God redder your pale blood! But mine is human-red; and when ye shall hear it is poured out upon earth, and see it mounting to Heaven, my God bless you, that seems sweet to you now, will blast and blind you like a curse.

1st Retainer. We hope not, my lord. Our humblest thanks for your blessing. Farewell!

[Exit Retainers.]

Becket. Farewell, friends! farewell, swallows! I wrong the bird; she leaves only the nest she built, they leave the builder. Why? Am I to be murdered to-night?

[Knocking at the door.]

Attendant. Here is a missive left at the gate by one from the castle.

Becket. Cornwall's hand or Leicester's: they write marvellously alike.

[Reading.]

'Fly at once to France, to King Louis of France: there be those about our King who would have thy blood.'

Was not my lord of Leicester bidden to our supper?

Attendant. Ay, my lord, and divers other earls and barons. But the hour is past, and our brother, Master Cook, he makes moan that all be a-getting cold.

Becket. And I make my moan along with him. Cold after warm, winter after summer, and the golden leaves, these earls and barons, that clung to me, frosted off me by the first cold frown of the King. Cold, but look how the table steams, like a heathen altar; nay, like the altar at Jerusalem. Shall God's good gifts be wasted? None of them here! Call in the poor from the streets, and let them feast.

Herbert. That is the parable of our blessed Lord.

Becket. And why should not the parable of our blessed Lord be acted again? Call in the poor! The Church is ever at variance with the kings, and ever at one with the poor. I marked a group of lazars in the marketplace—half-rag, half-sore—beggars, poor rogues (Heaven bless 'em) who never saw nor dreamed of such a banquet. I will amaze them. Call them in, I say. They shall henceforward be my earls and barons—our lords and masters in Christ Jesus!

[Exit Herbert.]

If the King hold his purpose, I am myself a beggar. Forty thousand marks! forty thousand devils—and these craven bishops!

A POOR MAN (entering) with his dog.

My lord Archbishop, may I come in with my poor friend, my dog? The King's verdurer caught him a-hunting in the forest, and cut off his paws. The dog followed his calling, my lord. I ha' carried him ever so many miles in my arms, and he licks my face and moans and cries out against the King.

Becket. Better thy dog than thee. The King's courts would use thee worse than thy dog—they are too

bloody. Were the Church king, it would be otherwise. Poor beast! poor beast! set him down. I will bind up his wounds with my napkin. Give him a bone, give him a bone! Who misuses a dog would misuse a child—they cannot speak for themselves. Past help! his paws are past help. God help him!

Enter the BEGGARS (and seat themselves at the Tables). BECKET and HERBERT wait upon them.

1st Beggar. Swine, sheep, ox—here's a French supper. When thieves fall out, honest men—

2nd Beggar. Is the Archbishop a thief who gives thee thy supper?

1st Beggar. Well, then, how does it go? When honest men fall out, thieves—no, it can't be that.

2nd Beggar. Who stole the widow's one sitting hen o' Sunday, when she was at mass?

1st Beggar. Come, come! thou hadst thy share on her. Sitting hen! Our Lord Becket's our great sitting-hen cock, and we shouldn't ha' been sitting here if the barons and bishops hadn't been a-sitting on the Archbishop.

Becket. Ay, the princes sat in judgment against me, and the Lord hath prepared your table—*Sederunt principes, ederunt pauperes.*

A Voice. Becket, beware of the knife!

Becket. Who spoke?

3rd Beggar. Nobody, my lord. What's that, my lord?

Becket. Venison.

3rd Beggar. Venison?

Becket. Buck; deer, as you call it.

3rd Beggar. King's meat! By the Lord, won't we pray for your lordship!

Becket. And, my children, your prayers will do more for me in the day of peril that dawns darkly and drearily over the house of God—yea, and in the day of judgment also, than the swords of the craven sycophants

would have done had they remained true to me whose bread they have partaken. I must leave you to your banquet. Feed, feast, and be merry. Herbert, for the sake of the Church itself, if not for my own, I must fly to France to-night. Come with me.

[Exit with Herbert.]

3rd Beggar. Here—all of you—my lord's health *(they drink)*. Well—if that isn't goodly wine—

1st Beggar. Then there isn't a goodly wench to serve him with it: they were fighting for her to-day in the street.

3rd Beggar. Peace!

1st Beggar. The black sheep baaed to the miller's ewe-lamb,

The miller's away for to-night.

Black sheep, quoth she, too black a sin for me.

And what said the black sheep, my masters?

We can make a black sin white.

3rd Beggar. Peace!

1st Beggar. 'Ewe lamb, ewe lamb, I am here by the dam.'

But the miller came home that night,

And so dusted his back with the meal in his sack,

That he made the black sheep white.

3rd Beggar. Be we not of the family? be we not a-supping with the head of the family? be we not in my lord's own refractory? Out from among us; thou art our black sheep.

Enter the four KNIGHTS.

Fitzurse. Sheep, said he? And sheep without the shepherd, too. Where is my lord Archbishop? Thou the lustiest and loniest of this Cain's brotherhood, answer.

3rd Beggar. With Cain's answer, my lord. Am I his keeper? Thou shouldst call him Cain, not me.

Fitzurse. So I do, for he would murder his brother the State.

3rd Beggar (rising and advancing). No, my lord; but because the Lord

bath set his mark upon him that no man should murder him.

Fitzurse. Where is he? where is he?

3rd Beggar. With Cain belike, in the land of Nod, or in the land of France for aught I know.

Fitzurse. France! Ha! De Morville, Tracy, Brito—fled is he? Cross swords all of you! swear to follow him! Remember the Queen!

[*The four Knights cross their swords.*]

De Brito. They mock us; he is here.

[*All the Beggars rise and advance upon them.*]

Fitzurse. Come, you filthy knaves, let us pass.

3rd Beggar. Nay, my lord, let us pass. We be a-going home after our supper in all humbleness, my lord; for the Archbishop loves humbleness, my lord; and though we be fifty to four, we daren't fight you with our crutches, my lord. There now, if thou hast not laid hands upon me! and my fellows know that I am all one scale like a fish. I pray God I haven't given thee my leprosy, my lord.

[*Fitzurse shrinks from him and another presses upon De Brito.*]

De Brito. Away, dog!

4th Beggar. And I was bit by a mad dog o' Friday, an' I be half dog already by this token, that tho' I can drink wine I cannot bide water, my lord; and I want to bite, I want to bite, and they do say the very breath catches.

De Brito. Insolent clown. Shall I smite him with the edge of the sword?

De Morville. No, nor with the flat of it either. Smite the shepherd and the sheep are scattered. Smite the sheep and the shepherd will excommunicate thee.

De Brito. Yet my fingers itch to beat him into nothing.

5th Beggar. So do mine, my lord. I was born with it, and sulphur won't bring it out o' me. But for all that the Archbishop washed my feet o' Tue-day. He likes it, my lord.

6th Beggar. And see here, my lord,

this rag fro' the gangrene i' my leg. It's humbling—it smells o' human natur'. Wilt thou smell it, my lord? for the Archbishop likes the smell on it, my lord; for I be his lord and master i' Christ, my lord.

De Morville. Faugh! we shall all be poisoned. Let us go.

[*They draw back, Beggars following.*]

7th Beggar. My lord, I ha' three sisters a-dying at home o' the sweating sickness. They be dead while I be a-supping.

8th Beggar. And I ha' nine darters i' the spital that be dead ten times o'er i' one day wi' the putrid fever; and I bring the taint on it along wi' me, for the Archbishop likes it, my lord.

[*Pressing upon the Knights till they disappear thro' the door.*]

3rd Beggar. Crutches, and itches, and leprosy, and ulcers, and gangrenes, and running sores, praise ye the Lord, for to-night ye have saved our Archbishop!

1st Beggar. I'll go back again. I ha'n't half done yet.

Herbert of Bosham (entering). My friends, the Archbishop bids you good night. He hath retired to rest, and being in great jeopardy of his life, he hath made his bed between the altars, from whence he sends me to bid you this night pray for him who hath fed you in the wilderness.

3rd Beggar. So we will—so we will, I warrant thee. Becket shall be king, and the Holy Father shall be king, and the world shall live by the King's venison and the bread o' the Lord, and there shall be no more poor for ever. Hurrah! Vive le Roy! That's the English of it.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—ROSAMUND'S BOWER.

A Garden of Flowers. In the midst a bank of wild flowers with a bench before it.

Voices heard singing among the trees.

Duet.

1. Is it the wind of the dawn that I hear in the pine overhead?
2. No; but the voice of the deep as it hollows the cliffs of the land.
1. Is there a voice coming up with the voice of the deep from the strand,
One coming up with a song in the flush of the glimmering red?
2. Love that is born of the deep coming up with the sun from the sea.
1. Love that can shape or can shatter a life till the life shall have fled?
2. Nay, let us welcome him, Love that can lift up a life from the dead.
1. Keep him away from the lone little isle. Let us be, let us be.
2. Nay, let him make it his own, let him reign in it—he, it is he,
Love that is born of the deep coming up with the sun from the sea.

Enter HENRY and ROSAMUND.

Rosamund. Be friends with him again—I do beseech thee.

Henry. With Becket? I have but one hour with thee—

Sceptre and crozier clashing, and the mitre

Grappling the crown—and when I flee from this

For a gasp of freer air, a breathing-while

To rest upon thy bosom and forget him—

Why thou, my bird, thou pipest Becket, Becket—

Yea, thou my golden dream of Love's own bower,

Must be the nightmare breaking on my peace

With 'Becket.'

Rosamund. O my life's life, not to smile

Is all but death to me. My sun, no cloud!

Let there not be one frown in this one hour.

Out of the many thine, let this be mine!

Look rather thou all-royal as when first

I met thee.

Henry. Where was that?

Rosamund. Forgetting that Forgets me too.

Henry. Nay, I remember it well. There on the moors.

Rosamund. And in a narrow path. A plover flew before thee. Then I

saw
Thy high black steed among the flaming furze,

Like sudden night in the main glare of day.

And from that height something was said to me

I knew not what.

Henry. I ask'd the way.

Rosamund. I think so.

So I lost mine.

Henry. Thou wast too shamed to answer.

Rosamund. Too scared—so young!

Henry. The rosebud of my rose!—

Well, well, no more of him—I have sent his folk,

His kin, all his belongings, overseas; Age, orphans, and babe-breasting mothers—all

By hundreds to him—there to beg, starve, die—

So that the fool King Louis feed them not.

The man shall feel that I can strike him yet.

Rosamund. Babes, orphans, mothers! is that royal, Sire?

Henry. And I have been as royal with the Church.

He shelter'd in the Abbey of Pontigny.

There wore his time studying the canon law

To work it against me. But since he

My friends at Veselay, I have let them know,

That if they keep him longer as their guest,
I scatter all their cows to all the hells.

Rosamund. And is that altogether royal?

Henry. Traitor!

Rosamund. A faithful traitress to thy royal fame.

Henry. Fame! what care I for fame? Spite, ignorance, envy,

Yea, honesty too, paint her what way they will.

Fame of to-day is infamy to-morrow;
Infamy of to-day is fame to-morrow;

And round and round again. What matters? Royal—

I mean to leave the royalty of my crown

Unless'n'd to mine heirs.

Rosamund. Still—thy fame too: I say that should be royal.

Henry. And I say, I care not for thy saying.

Rosamund. And I say, I care not for thy saying. A greater

King Than thou art, Love, who cares not for the word,

Makes 'care not'—care. There have I spoken true?

Henry. Care dwell with me for ever, when I cease

To care for thee as ever!

Rosamund. No need! no need! . . . There is a bench. Come, wilt thou sit?

. . . My bank Of wild-flowers [*he sits*]. At thy feet!

[*She sits at his feet.*]

Henry. I had them clear A royal pleasure for thee, in the

wood, Not leave these countryfolk at court.

Rosamund. I brought them In from the wood, and set them here.

I love them More than the garden flowers, that seem at most

Sweet guests, or foreign cousins, not half speaking

The language of the land. I love them too,

Yes. But, my liege, I am sure, of all the roses—

Shame fall on those who gave it a dog's name—

This wild one (*picking a briar-rose*)—nay, I shall not prick myself—

Is sweetest. Do but smell!

Henry. Thou rose of the world! Thou rose of all the roses! [*Muttering.*]

I am not worthy of her—this beast-body

That God has plunged my soul in—I, that taking

The Fiend's advantage of a throne, so long

Have wander'd among women,—a foul stream

Thro' fever-breeding levels,—at her side,

Among these happy dales, run clearer, drop

The mud I carried, like yon brook, and glass

The faithful face of heaven—

[*Looking at her, and unconsciously aloud,* —thine! thine!

Rosamund. I know it.

Henry (*muttering*). Not hers. We have but one bond, her hate of

Becket.

Rosamund (*half hearing*). Nay! nay! what art thou muttering?

I hate Becket?

Henry (*muttering*). A sane and natural loathing for a soul

Purer, and truer and nobler than herself;

And mine a bitterer illegitimate hate, A bastard hate, born of a former

love.

Rosamund. My fault to name him! O let the hand of one

To whom thy voice is all her music, stay it

But for a breath.

[*Puts her hand before his lips.* Speak 'only of thy love.

Why there—like some loud beggar at thy gate—

The happy boldness of this hand hath won it

Love's alms, thy kiss (*looking at her hand*)—Sacred! I'll kiss it too.
[*Kissing it.*]

There! wherefore dost thou so peruse it? Nay,
There may be crosses in my line of life.

Henry. Not half *her hand*—no hand to mate with *her*,
If it should come to that.

Rosamund. With her? with whom?

Henry. Life on the hand is naked gypsy-stuff;
Life on the face, the brows—clear innocence!

Vein'd marble—not a furrow yet—and hers

Crust and recrost, a venomous spider's web—

Rosamund (*springing up*). Out of the cloud, my Sun—out of the eclipse

Narrowing my golden hour!

Henry. O Rosamund,
I would be true—would tell thee all—
and something

I had to say—I love thee none the less—

Which will so vex thee.

Rosamund. Something against *me*?

Henry. No, no, against myself.

Rosamund. I will not hear it.
Come, come, mine hour! I bargain
for mine hour.

I'll call thee little Geoffrey.

Henry. Call him!

Rosamund. Geoffrey!

Enter GEOFFREY.

Henry. How the boy grows!

Rosamund. Ay, and his brows are
thine;

The mouth is only Clifford, my dear
father.

Geoffrey. My liege, what hast thou
brought me?

Henry. Venal imp!
What say'st thou to the Chancellor-
ship of England?

Geoffrey. O yes, my liege.

Henry. 'O yes, my liege!' He
speaks

As if it were a cake of gingerbread.

Dost thou know, my boy, what it is
to be Chancellor of England?

Geoffrey. Something good, or thou
wouldst not give it me.

Henry. It is, my boy, to side with
the king when Chancellor, and then
to be made Archbishop and go against
the King who made him, and turn the
world upside down.

Geoffrey. I won't have it then.
Nay, but give it me, and I promise
thee not to turn the world upside
down.

Henry (*giving him a ball*). Here
is a ball, my boy, thy world, to turn
anyway and play with as thou wilt—
which is more than I can do with mine.
Go try it, play. [*Exit Geoffrey.*]

A pretty lusty boy.

Rosamund. So like to thee:
Like to be liker.

Henry. Not in my chin, I hope!
That threatens double.

Rosamund. Thou art manlike
perfect.

Henry. Ay, ay, no doubt; and
were I humpt behind,
Thou'dst say as much—the goodly
way of women

Who love, for which I love them.
May God grant

No ill befall or him or thee when I
Am gone.

Rosamund. Is *he* thy enemy.
Henry. He? who? ay!

Rosamund. Thine enemy knows
the secret of my bower.

Henry. And I could tear him
asunder with wild horses
Before he would betray it. Nay—no
fear!

More like is he to excommunicate
me.

Rosamund. And I would creep,
crawl over knife-edge flint
Barefoot, a hundred leagues, to stay
his hand

Before he flash'd the bolt.

Henry. And when he flash'd it
Shrink from me, like a daughter of
the Church.

Rosamund. Ay, but he will not.

Henry. Ay! but if he did?
Rosamund. O then! O then! I
 almost fear to say
 That my poor heretic heart would
 excommunicate
 His excommunication, clinging to
 thee
 Closer than ever.

Henry (raising Rosamund and kissing her). My brave-hearted
 Rose!

Hath he ever been to see thee?

Rosamund. Here? not he.
 And it is so lonely here—no confessor.

Henry. Thou shalt confess all thy
 sweet sins to me.

Rosamund. Besides, we came away
 in such a heat,

I brought not ev'n my crucifix.

Henry. Take this.
 [Giving her the Crucifix which
 Eleanor gave him.]

Rosamund. O beautiful! May I
 have it as mine, till mine
 Be mine again?

Henry (throwing it round her neck).
 Thine—as I am—till death!

Rosamund. Death? no! I'll have
 it with me in my shroud,
 And wake with it, and show it to all
 the Saints.

Henry. Nay—I must go; but
 when thou layest thy lip
 To this, remembering One who died
 for thee,

Remember also one who lives for
 thee

Out there in France; for I must
 hence to brave

The Pope, King Louis, and this tur-
 bulent priest.

Rosamund (kneeling). O by thy
 love for me, all mine for thee,
 Fling not thy soul into the flames of
 hell:

I kneel to thee—be friends with him
 again.

Henry. Look, look! if little Geof-
 frey have not tost

His ball into the brook! makes after
 it too

To find it. Why, the child will
 drown himself.

Rosamund. Geoffrey! Geoffrey!
 [Exeunt.]

SCENE II.—MONTMIRAIL.

'*The Meeting of the Kings.*' JOHN
 OF OXFORD and HENRY. *Crowd*
in the distance.

John of Oxford. You have not
 crown'd young Henry yet, my
 liege?

Henry. Crown'd! by God's eyes,
 we will not have him crown'd.

I spoke of late to the boy, he an-
 swer'd me,

As if he wore the crown already—
 No,

We will not have him crown'd.

'Tis true what Becket told me, that
 the mother

Would make him play his kingship
 against mine.

John of Oxford. Not have him
 crown'd?

Henry. Not now—not yet! and
 Becket—

Becket should crown him were he
 crown'd at all:

But, since we would be lord of our
 own manor,

This Canterbury, like a wounded
 deer,

Has fled our presence and our feed-
 ing-grounds.

John of Oxford. Cannot a smooth
 tongue lick him whole again

To serve your will?

Henry. He hates my will, not me.

John of Oxford. There's York, my
 liege.

Henry. But England scarce would
 hold

Young Henry king, if only crown'd
 by York,

And that would stilt up York to
 twice himself.

There is a movement yonder in the
 crowd—

See if our pious—what shall I call
 him, John?—

Husband-in-law, our smooth-shorn
 suzerain,

Be yet within the field.

John of Oxford. I will. [*Exit.*
Henry. Ay! Ay!

Mince and go back! his politic Holiness

Hath all but climb'd the Roman perch again,

And we shall hear him presently with clapt wing

Crow over Barbarossa—at last tongue-free

To blast my realms with excommunication

And interdict. I must patch up a peace—

A piece in this long-tugged-at, thread-bare-worn

Quarrel of Crown and Church—to rend again.

His Holiness cannot steer straight thro' shoals,

Nor I. The citizen's heir hath conquer'd me

For the moment. So we make our peace with him.

Enter Louis.

Brother of France, what shall be done with Becket?

Louis. The holy Thomas! Brother, you have traffick'd

Between the Emperor and the Pope, between

The Pope and Antipope—a perilous game

For men to play with God.

Henry. Ay, ay, good brother, They call you the Monk-King.

Louis. Who calls me? she That was my wife, now yours? You

have her Duchy, The point you aim'd at, and pray God

she prove True wife to you. You have had the

better of us In secular matters.

Henry. Come, confess, good brother,

You did your best or worst to keep her Duchy.

Only the golden Leopard printed in it

Such hold-fast claws that you perforce again

Shrank into France. Tut, tut! did we convene

This conference but to babble of our wives?

They are plagues enough in-door.

Louis. We fought in the East, And felt the sun of Antioch scald our

mail, And push'd our lances into Saracen

hearts. We never hounded on the State at

home To spoil the Church.

Henry. How should you see this rightly?

Louis. Well, well, no more! I am proud of my 'Monk-King,'

Whoever named me and, brother, Holy Church

May rock, but will not wreck, nor our Archbishop

Stagger on the slope decks for any rough sea

Blown by the breath of kings. We do forgive you

For aught you wrought against us. [*Henry holds up his hand.*

Nay, I pray you, Do not defend yourself. You will do

much To rake out all old dying heats, if

you, At my requesting, will but look

into The wrongs you did him, and restore

his kin, Reseat him on his throne of Canterbury,

Be, both, the friends you were. *Henry.* The friends we were!

Co-mates we were, and had our sport

together, Co-kings we were, and made the laws

together. The world had never seen the like

before. You are too cold to know the fashion

of it. Well, well, we will be gentle with

him, gracious— Most gracious.

Enter BECKET, after him, JOHN OF OXFORD, ROGER OF YORK, GILBERT FOLIOT, DE BROU, FITZURSE, etc.

Only that the rift he made
May close between us, here I am
wholly king,
The word should come from him.

Becket (kneeling). Then, my dear
liege,
I here deliver all this controversy
Into your royal hands.

Henry. Ah, Thomas, Thomas,
Thou art thyself again, Thomas again.

Becket (rising). Saving God's
honor!

Henry. Out upon thee, man!
Saving the Devil's honor, his yes and
no.

Knights, bishops, earls, this London
spawn—by Mahound,
I had sooner have been born a Mussul-
man—

Less clashing with their priests—
I am half-way down the slope—will
no man stay me?

I dash myself to pieces—I stay my-
self—

Puff—it is gone. You, Master
Becket, you

That owe to me your power over
me—

Nay, nay—
Brother of France, you have taken,
cherish'd him

Who thief-like fled from his own
church by night,

No man pursuing. I would have had
him back.

Take heed he do not turn and rend
you too:

For whatsoever may displease him—
that

Is clean against God's honor—a shift,
a trick

Whereby to challenge, face me out of
all

My regal rights. Yet, yet—that none
may dream

I go against God's honor—ay, or
himself

In any reason, choose

A hundred of the wisest heads from
England,
A hundred, too, from Normandy and
Anjou:

Let these decide on what was custom-
ary

In olden days, and all the Church of
France

Decide on their decision, I am con-
tent.

More, what the mightiest and the
holiest

Of all his predecessors may have
done

Ev'n to the least and meanest of my
own,

Let him do the same to me—I am
content.

Louis. Ay, ay! the King humbles
himself enough.

Becket. (Aside) Words! he will
wriggle out of them like an eel

When the time serves. *(Aloud.)* My
lieges and my lords,

The thanks of Holy Church are due
to those

That went before us for their work,
which we

Inheriting reap an easier harvest.
Yet—

Louis. My lord, will you be greater
than the Saints,

More than St. Peter? whom—what
is it you doubt?

Behold your peace at hand.

Becket. I say that those
Who went before us did not wholly
clear

The deadly growths of earth, which
Hell's own heat

So dwelt on that they rose and dark-
en'd Heaven.

Yet they did much. Would God they
had torn up all

By the hard root, which shoots again;
our trial

Had so been less; but, seeing they
were men

Defective or excessive, must we fol-
low

All that they overdid or underdid?

Nay, if they were defective as St.
Peter



"MAUD'S OWN LITTLE OAK-ROOM."—Page 163.



Denying Christ, who yet defied the tyrant,
We hold by his defiance, not his defect.

O good son Louis, do not counsel me,
No, to suppress God's honor for the sake

Of any king that breathes. No, God forbid!

Henry. No! God forbid! and turn me Mussulman!

No God but one, and Mahound is his prophet.

But for your Christian, look you, you shall have

None other God but me—me, Thomas, son

Of Gilbert Becket, London merchant. Out!

I hear no more. *[Exit.]*

Louis. Our brother's anger puts him,

Poor man, beside himself—not wise. My lord,

We have claspt your cause, believing that our brother

Had wrong'd you; but this day he proffer'd peace.

You will have war; and tho' we grant the Church

King over this world's kings, yet, my good lord,

We that are kings are something in this world,

And so we pray you, draw yourself from under

The wings of France. We shelter you no more. *[Exit.]*

John of Oxford. I am glad that France hath scouted him at last:

I told the Pope what manner of man he was. *[Exit.]*

Roger of York. Yea, since he flouts the will of either realm,

Let either cast him away like a dead dog! *[Exit.]*

Foliot. Yea, let a stranger spoil his heritage,

And let another take his bishopric!

De Broc. Our castle, my lord, belongs to Canterbury. *[Exit.]*

I pray you come and take it. *[Exit.]*

Fitzurse. When you will. *[Exit.]*

Becket. Cursed be John of Oxford, Roger of York,

And Gilbert Foliot! cursed those De Brocs

That hold our Saltwood Castle from our see!

Cursed Fitzurse, and all the rest of them

That sow this hate between my lord and me!

Voices from the Crowd. Blessed be the Lord Archbishop, who hath withstood two Kings to their faces for the honor of God.

Becket. Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, praise!

I thank you, sons; when kings but hold by crowns,

The crowd that hungers for a crown in Heaven

Is my true king.

Herbert. Thy true King bad thee be A fisher of men; thou hast them in thy net.

Becket. I am too like the King here; both of us

Too headlong for our office. Better have been

A fisherman at Bosham, my good Herbert,

Thy birthplace—the sea-creek—the petty rill

That falls into it—the green field—the gray church—

The simple lobster-basket, and the mesh—

The more or less of daily labor done—

The pretty gaping bills in the homestead

Piping for bread—the daily want supplied—

The daily pleasure to supply it.

Herbert. Ah, Thomas, You had not borne it, no, not for a day.

Becket. Well, maybe, no,

Herbert. But bear with Walter Map,

For here he comes to comment on the time.

Enter WALTER MAP.

Walter Map. Pity, my lord, that you have quenched the warmth of France toward you, tho' His Holiness, after much smouldering and smoking, be kindled again upon your quarter.

Becket. Ay, if he do not end in smoke again.

Walter Map. My lord, the fire, when first kindled, said to the smoke, 'Go up, my son, straight to Heaven.' And the smoke said, 'I go;' but anon the North-east took and turned him South-west, then the South-west turned him North-east, and so of the other winds; but it was in him to go up, straight if the time had been quieter. Your lordship affects the unswerving perpendicular; but His Holiness, pushed one way by the Empire and another by England, if he move at all, Heaven stay him, is fain to diagonalize.

Herbert. Diagonalize! thou art a word-monger.

Our Thomas never will diagonalize. Thou art a jester and a verse-maker. Diagonalize!

Walter Map. Is the world any the worse for my verses if the Latin rhymes be rolled out from a full mouth? or any harm done to the people if my jest be in defence of the Truth?

Becket. Ay, if the jest be so done that the people

Delight to wallow in the grossness of it,

Till Truth herself be shamed of her defender.

Non defensoribus istis, Walter Map.

Walter Map. Is that my case? so if the city be sick, and I cannot call the kennel sweet, your lordship would suspend me from verse-writing, as you suspended yourself after sub-writing to the customs.

Becket. I pray God pardon mine infirmity.

Walter Map. Nay, my lord, take heart; for tho' you suspended yourself, the Pope let you down again;

and tho' you suspend Foliot or another, the Pope will not leave them in suspense, for the Pope himself is always in suspense, like Mahound's coffin hung between heaven and earth—always in suspense, like the scales, till the weight of Germany or the gold of England brings one of them down to the dust—always in suspense, like the tail of the horologe—to and fro—tick-tack—we make the time, we keep the time, ay, and we serve the time; for I have heard say that if you boxed the Pope's ears with a purse, you might stagger him, but he would pocket the purse. No saying of mine—Jocelyn of Salisbury. But the King hath bought half the College of Redhats. He warmed to you to-day, and you have chilled him again. Yet you both love God. Agree with him quickly again, even for the sake of the Church. My one grain of good counsel which you will not swallow. I hate a split between old friendships as I hate the dirty gap in the face of a Cistercian monk, that will swallow anything. Farewell, [Exit.

Becket. Mapscoffs at Rome. I all but hold with Map. Save for myself no Rome were left in England, All had been his. Why should this Rome, this Rome, Still choose Barabbas rather than the Christ, Absolve the left-hand thief and damn the right? Take fees of tyranny, wink at sacrilege, Which even Peter had not dared? condemn

The blameless exile?—

Herbert. Thee, thou holy Thomas! I would that thou hadst been the Holy Father.

Becket. I would have done my most to keep Rome holy, I would have made Rome know she still is Rome—

Who stands aghast at her eternal self And shakes at mortal kings—her vacillation,

Avarice, craft—O God, how many an innocent
Has left his bones upon the way to Rome

Unwept, uncared for. Yea—on mine own self

The King had had no power except for Rome.

'Tis not the King who is guilty of mine exile,

But Rome, Rome, Rome!

Herbert. My Lord, I see this Louis Returning, ah! to drive thee from his realm.

Becket. He said as much before.

Thou art no prophet,

Nor yet a prophet's son.

Herbert. Whatever he say,
Deny not thou God's honor for a king.

The King looks troubled.

Re-enter KING LOUIS.

Louis. My dear lord Archbishop,
I learn but now that those poor Poitevins,

That in thy cause were stirr'd against King Henry,

Have been, despite his kingly promise given

To our own self of pardon, evilly used And put to pain. I have lost all trust in him.

The Church alone hath eyes—and now I see

That I was blind—suffer the phrase—surrendering

God's honor to the pleasure of a man.

Forgive me and absolve me, holy father. [*Kneels.*]

Becket. Son, I absolve thee in the name of God.

Louis (rising). Return to Sens, where we will care for you.

The wine and wealth of all our France are yours;

Rest in our realm, and be at peace with all. [*Exeunt.*]

Voices from the Crowd. Long live the good King Louis! God bless the great Archbishop!

Re-enter HENRY and JOHN OF OXFORD.

Henry (looking after King Louis and Becket). Ay, there they go—both backs are turn'd to me—

Why then I strike into my former path

For England, crown young Henry there, and make

Our waning Eleanor all but love me!

Thou hast served me heretofore with Rome—and well.

They call thee John the Swearer.

John of Oxford. For this reason, That, being ever duteous to the King,

I evermore have sworn upon his side, And ever mean to do it.

Henry (claps him on the shoulder).

Honest John!

To Rome again! the storm begins again.

Spare not thy tongue! be lavish with our coins,

Threaten our junction with the Emperor—flatter

And fright the Pope—bribe all the Cardinals—leave

Lateran and Vatican in one dust of gold—

Swear and unswear, state and misstate thy best!

I go to have young Henry crown'd by York.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—THE BOWER.

HENRY and ROSAMUND.

Henry. All that you say is just.

I cannot answer it

Till better times, when I shall put away—

Rosamund. What will you put away?

Henry. That which you ask me Till better times. Let it content you now

There is no woman that I love so well.

Rosamund. No woman but should
be content with that—

Henry. And one fair child to
fondle!

Rosamund. O yes, the child
We waited for so long—heaven's gift
at last—

And how you doated on him then!
To-day

I almost fear'd your kiss was colder
—yes—

But then the child *is* such a child.
What chance

That he should ever spread into the
man

Here in our silence? I have done
my best.

I am not learn'd.

Henry. I am the King, his
father,

And I will look to it. Is our secret
ours?

Have you had any alarm? no
stranger?

Rosamund. No.

The warder of the bower hath given
himself

Of late to wine. I sometimes think
he sleeps

When he should watch; and yet what
fear? the people

Believe the wood enchanted. No one
comes,

Nor foe nor friend; his fond excess
of wine

Springs from the loneliness of my poor
bower,

Which weighs even on me.

Henry. Yet these tree-towers,
Their long bird-echoing minster-aisles,

—the voice
Of the perpetual brook, these golden
slopes

Of Solomon-shaming flowers—that
was your saying,

All pleased you so at first.

Rosamund. Not now so much.
My Anjou bower was scarce as beau-
tiful.

But you were oftener there. I have
none but you.

The brook's voice is not yours, and
no flower, not

The sun himself, should he be changed
to one,

Could shine away the darkness of that
gap

Left by the lack of love.

Henry. The lack of love!

Rosamund. Of one we love. Nay,
I would not be bold,

Yet hoped ere this you might—
[*Looks earnestly at him.*]

Henry. Anything further?

Rosamund. Only my best bower-
maiden died of late,

And that old priest whom John of
Salisbury trusted

Hath sent another.

Henry. Secret?

Rosamund. I but ask'd her
One question, and she prim'd her

mouth and put
Her hands together—thus—and said,

God help her,
That she was sworn to silence.

Henry. What did you ask her?

Rosamund. Some daily something—
nothing.

Henry. Secret, then?

Rosamund. I do not love her.
Must you go, my liege,

So suddenly?

Henry. I came to England sud-
denly,

And on a great occasion sure to
wake

As great a wrath in Becket—

Rosamund. Always Becket!
He always comes between us.

Henry. —And to meet it
I needs must leave as suddenly. It is

raining,
Put on your hood and see me to the
bounds. [*Exeunt.*]

Margery (singing behind scene).

Babble in bower

Under the rose!

Bee mustn't buzz,

Whoop—but he knows.

Kiss me, little one,

Nobody near!

Grasshopper, grasshopper,

Whoop—you can hear.

Kiss in the bower,
 Tit on the tree!
 Bird mustn't tell,
 Whoop—he can see.

Enter MARGERY.

I ha' been but a week here and I ha' seen what I ha' seen, for to be sure it's no more than a week since our old Father Philip that has confessed our mother for twenty years, and she was hard put to it, and to speak truth, nigh at the end of our last crust, and that mouldy, and she cried out on him to put me forth in the world and to make me a woman of the world, and to win my own bread, whereupon he asked our mother if I could keep a quiet tongue i' my head, and not speak till I was spoke to, and I answered for myself that I never spoke more than was needed, and he told me he would advance me to the service of a great lady, and took me ever so far away, and gave me a great pat o' the cheek for a pretty wench, and said it was a pity to blindfold such eyes as mine, and such to be sure they be, but he blinded 'em for all that, and so brought me no-hows as I may say, and the more shame to him after his promise, into a garden and not into the world, and bad me whatever I saw not to speak one word, an' it 'ud be well for me in the end, for there were great ones who would look after me, and to be sure I ha' seen great ones to-day—and then not to speak one word, for that's the rule o' the garden, tho' to be sure if I had been Eve i' the garden I shouldn't ha' minded the apple, for what's an apple, you know, save to a child, and I'm no child, but more a woman o' the world than my lady here, and I ha' seen what I ha' seen—tho' to be sure if I hadn't minded it we should all on us ha' had to go, bless the Saints, wi' bare backs, but the backs 'ud ha' countenanced one another, and belike it 'ud ha' been always summer, and anyhow I am as well-shaped as my

lady here, and I ha' seen what I ha' seen, and what's the good of my talking to myself, for here comes my lady (*enter Rosamund*), and, my lady, tho' I shouldn't speak one word, I wish you joy o' the King's brother.

Rosamund. What is it you mean?

Margery. I mean your Goodman, your husband, my lady, for I saw your ladyship a-parting wi' him even now i' the coppice, when I was a-getting o' bluebells for your ladyship's nose to smell on—and I ha' seen the King once at Oxford, and he's as like the King as fingernail to fingernail, and I thought at first it was the King, only you know the King's married, for. King Louis—

Rosamund. Married!

Margery. Years and years, my lady, for her husband, King Louis—

Rosamund. Hush!

Margery.—And I thought if it were the King's brother he had a better bride than the King, for the people do say that his is bad beyond all reckoning, and—

Rosamund. The people lie.

Margery. Very like, my lady, but most on 'em know an honest woman and a lady when they see her, and besides they say, she makes songs, and that's against her, for I never knew an honest woman that could make songs, tho' to be sure our mother 'ill sing me old songs by the hour, but then, God help her, she had 'em from her mother, and her mother from her mother back and back for ever so long, but none on 'em ever made songs, and they were all honest.

Rosamund. Go, you shall tell me of her some other time.

Margery. There's none so much to tell on her, my lady, only she kept the seventh commandment better than some I know on, or I couldn't look your ladyship i' the face, and she brew'd the best ale in all Glo'ster, that is to say in her time when she had the 'Crown.'

Rosamund. The crown! who?

Margery. Mother.

Rosamund. I mean her whom you call—fancy—my husband's brother's wife.

Margery. Oh, Queen Eleanor. Yes, my lady; and tho' I be sworn not to speak a word, I can tell you all about her, if—

Rosamund. No word now. I am faint and sleepy. Leave me. Nay—go. What! will you anger me?

[*Exit Margery.*
He charged me not to question any of those

About me. Have I? no! she question'd me.

Did she not slander *him*? Should she stay here?

May she not tempt me, being at my side,

To question *her*? Nay, can I send her hence

Without his kingly leave? I am in the dark.

I have lived, poor bird, from cage to cage, and known

Nothing but him—happy to know no more,

So that he loved me—and he loves me—yes,

And bound me by his love to secrecy

Till his own time.

Eleanor, Eleanor, have I Not heard ill things of her in France?

Oh, she's The Queen of France. I see it—some confusion,

Some strange mistake. I did not hear aright,

Myself confused with parting from the King.

Margery (behind scene). Bee mustn't buzz,

Whoop—but he knows.

Rosamund. Yet her—what her? he hinted of some her—

When he was here before—

Something that would displease me. Hath he stray'd

From love's clear path into the common bush,

And, being scratch'd, returns to his true rose,

Who hath not thorn enough to prick him for it,
Ev'n with a word?

Margery (behind scene). Bird mustn't tell,

Whoop—he can see.

Rosamund. I would not hear him.

Nay—there's more—he frown'd 'No mate for her, if it should come to that—'

To that—to what?

Margery (behind scene). Whoop—but he knows,

Whoop—but he knows.

Rosamund. O God! some dreadful truth is breaking on me—

Some dreadful thing is coming on me. [*Enter Geoffrey.*

Geoffrey. What are you crying for,

when the sun shines?

Rosamund. Hath not thy father left us to ourselves?

Geoffrey. Ay, but he's taken the rain with him. I hear Margery: I'll

go play with her. [*Exit Geoffrey.*

Rosamund. Rainbow, stay,

Gleam upon gloom,

Bright as my dream,

Rainbow, stay!

But it passes away,

Gloom upon gleam,

Dark as my doom—

O rainbow stay.

SCENE II.—OUTSIDE THE WOODS NEAR ROSAMUND'S BOWER.

ELEANOR. FITZURSE.

Eleanor. Up from the salt lips of the land we two

Have track'd the King to this dark inland wood;

And somewhere hereabouts he vanish'd. Here

His turtle builds; his exit is our adit: Watch! he will out again, and presently,

Seeing he must to Westminster and crown

Young Henry there to-morrow.

Fitzurse. We have watch'd
So long in vain, he hath pass'd out
again,
And on the other side.

[*A great horn winded.*
Hark! Madam!

Eleanor. Ay,
How ghostly sounds that horn in the
black wood!

[*A countryman flying.*
Whither away, man? what are you
flying from?

Countryman. The witch! the
witch! she sits naked by a great heap
of gold in the middle of the wood,
and when the horn sounds she comes
out as a wolf. Get you hence! a
man passed in there to-day: I holla'd
to him, but he didn't hear me: he'll
never out again, the witch has got
him. I daren't stay—I daren't
stay!

Eleanor. Kind of the witch to
give thee warning tho'.

[*Man flies.*
Is not this wood-witch of the rustic's
fear
Our woodland Circe that hath witch'd
the King?

[*Horn sounded. Another flying.*

Fitzurse. Again! stay, fool, and
tell me why thou fliest.

Countryman. Fly thou too. The
King keeps his forest head of game
here, and when that horn sounds, a
score of wolf-dogs are let loose that
will tear thee piecemeal. Linger not
till the third horn. Fly! [*Exit.*

Eleanor. This is the likelier tale.
We have hit the place.
Now let the King's fine game look to
itself. [*Horn.*

Fitzurse. Again!—
And far on in the dark heart of the
wood
I hear the yelping of the hounds of
hell.

Eleanor. I have my dagger here
to still their throats.

Fitzurse. Nay, Madam, not to-
night—the night is falling.
What can be done to-night?

Eleanor. Well—well—away.

SCENE III—TRAITOR'S MEADOW
AT FRÉTEVAL. PAVILIONS AND
TENTS OF THE ENGLISH AND
FRENCH BARONAGE.

BECKET and HERBERT OF BOSHAM.

Becket. See here!

Herbert. What's here?

Becket. A notice from the priest,
To whom our John of Salisbury com-
mitted

The secret of the bower, that our wolf-
Queen

Is prowling round the fold. I should
be back

In England ev'n for this.

Herbert. These are by-things
In the great cause.

Becket. The by-things of the Lord
Are the wrong'd innocences that will
cry

From all the hidden by-ways of the
world

In the great day against the wronger.
I know

Thy meaning. Perish she, I, all,
before

The Church should suffer wrong!

Herbert. Do you see, my lord,
There is the King talking with Wal-
ter Map?

Becket. He hath the Pope's last
letters, and they threaten
The immediate thunder-blast of inter-
dict:

Yet he can scarce be touching upon
those,

Or scarce would smile that fashion.

Herbert. Winter sunshine!
Beware of opening out thy bosom to
it,

Lest thou, myself, and all thy flock
should catch

An after ague-fit of trembling.
Look!

He bows, he bares his head, he is
coming hither.

Still with a smile.

Enter KING HENRY and WALTER
MAP.

Henry. We have had so many hours together, Thomas, So many happy hours alone together, That I would speak with you once more alone.

Becket. My liege, your will and happiness are mine.

[*Exeunt King and Becket.*]

Herbert. The same smile still.

Walter Map. Do you see that great black cloud that hath come over the sun and cast us all into shadow?

Herbert. And feel it too.

Walter Map. And see you yon side-beam that is forced from under it, and sets the church-tower over there all a-hell-fire as it were.

Herbert. Ay.

Walter Map. It is this black, bell-silencing, anti-marrying, burial-hinder-ing interdict that hath squeezed out this side-smile upon Canterbury, whereof may come conflagration. Were I Thomas, I wouldn't trust it. Sudden change is a house on sand; and tho' I count Henry honest enough, yet when fear creeps in at the front, honesty steals out at the back, and the King at last is fairly scared by this cloud—this interdict. I have been more for the King than the Church in this matter—yea, even for the sake of the Church: for, truly, as the case stood, you had safer have slain an archbishop than a she-goat: but our recoverer and upholder of customs hath in this crowning of young Henry by York and London so violated the immemorial usage of the Church, that, like the gravedigger's child I have heard of, trying to ring the bell, he hath half-hanged himself in the rope of the Church, or rather pulled all the Church with the Holy Father astride of it down upon his own head.

Herbert. Were you there?

Walter Map. In the church rope?—no. I was at the crowning, for I have pleasure in the pleasure of crowds, and to read the faces of men at a great show.

Herbert. And how did Roger of York comport himself?

Walter Map. As magnificently and archiepiscopally as our Thomas would have done: only there was a dare-devil in his eye—I should say a dare-Becket. He thought less of two kings than of one Roger the king of the occasion. Foliot is the holier man, perhaps the better. Once or twice there ran a twitch across his face as who should say what's to follow? but Salisbury was a calf cowed by Mother Church, and every now and then glancing about him like a thief at night when he hears a door open in the house and thinks 'the master.'

Herbert. And the father-king?

Walter Map. The father's eye was so tender it would have called a goose off the green, and once he strove to hide his face, like the Greek king when his daughter was sacrificed, but he thought better of it: it was but the sacrifice of a kingdom to his son, a smaller matter; but as to the young crowning himself, he looked so malapert in the eyes, that had I fathered him I had given him more of the rod than the sceptre. Then followed the thunder of the captains and the shouting, and so we came on to the banquet, from whence there puffed out such an incense of unctuousity into the nostrils of our Gods of Church and State, that Lucullus or Apicius might have sniffed it in their Hades of heathenism, so that the smell of their own roast had not come across it—

Herbert. Map, tho' you make your butt too big, you overshoot it.

Walter Map.—For as to the fish, they de-miracled the miraculous draught, and might have sunk a navy—

Herbert. There again, Goliathing and Goliathising!

Walter Map.—And as for the flesh at table, a whole Peter's sheet, with all manner of game, and four-footed things, and fowls—

Herbert. And all manner of creeping things too?

Walter Map. —Well, there were Abbots—but they did not bring their women; and so we were dull enough at first, but in the end we flourished out into a merriment; for the old King would act servitor and hand a dish to his son; whereupon my lord of York—his fine-cut face bowing and beaming with all that courtesy which hath less loyalty in it than the backward scrape of the clown's heel—'great honor,' says he, 'from the King's self to the King's son.' Did you hear the young King's quip?

Herbert. No, what was it?

Walter Map. Glancing at the days when his father was only Earl of Anjou, he answered:—'Should not an earl's son wait on a king's son?' And when the cold corners of the King's mouth began to thaw, there was a great motion of laughter among us, part real, part childlike, to be freed from the dulness—part royal, for King and kingling both laughed, and so we could not but laugh, as by a royal necessity—part childlike again—when we felt we had laughed too long and could not stay ourselves—many midriff-shaken even to tears, as springs gush out after earthquakes—but from those, as I said before, there may come a conflagration—tho', to keep the figure moist and make it hold water, I should say rather, the lacrymation of a lamentation; but look if Thomas have not flung himself at the King's feet. They have made it up again—for the moment.

Herbert. Thanks to the blessed Magdalen, whose day it is.

Re-enter HENRY and BECKET. (During their conference the BARONS and BISHOPS of FRANCE and ENGLAND come in at back of stage.)

Becket. Ay, King! for in thy kingdom, as thou knowest,
The spouse of the Great King, thy King, hath fallen—

The daughter of Zion lies beside the way—

The priests of Baal tread her underfoot—

The golden ornaments are stolen from her—

Henry. Have I not promised to restore her, Thomas,

And send thee back again to Canterbury?

Becket. Send back again those exiles of my kin

Who wander famine-wasted thro' the world.

Henry. Have I not promised, man, to send them back?

Becket. Yet one thing more. Thou hast broken thro' the pales

Of privilege, crowning thy young son by York,

London and Salisbury—not Canterbury.

Henry. York crown'd the Conqueror—not Canterbury.

Becket. There was no Canterbury in William's time.

Henry. But Hereford, you know, crown'd the first Henry.

Becket. But Anselm crown'd this Henry o'er again.

Henry. And thou shalt crown my Henry o'er again.

Becket. And is it then with thy good-will that I

Proceed against thine evil councillors,

And hurl the dread ban of the Church on those

Who made the second mitre play the first,

And acted me?

Henry. Well, well, then—have thy way!

It may be they were evil councillors.

What more, my lord Archbishop?

What more, Thomas?

I make thee full amends. Say all thy say,

But blaze not out before the Frenchmen here.

Becket. More? Nothing, so thy promise be thy deed.

Henry (holding out his hand).
Give me thy hand. My Lords
of France and England,
My friend of Canterbury and myself

Are now once more at perfect amity.
Unkingly should I be, and most un-
knightly,
Not striving still, however much in
vain,

To rival him in Christian charity.

Herbert. All praise to Heaven,
and sweet St. Magdalen!

Henry. And so farewell until we
meet in England.

Becket. I fear, my liege, we may
not meet in England

Henry. How, do you make me a
traitor?

Becket. No, indeed!
That be far from thee.

Henry. Come, stay with us, then,
Before you part for England.

Becket. I am bound
For that one hour to stay with good
King Louis,
Who helpt me when none else.

Herbert. He said thy life
Was not one hour's worth in England
save
King Henry gave thee first the kiss of
peace.

Henry. He said so? Louis, did
he? look you, Herbert,
When I was in mine anger with King
Louis,

I swore I would not give the kiss of
peace,

Not on French ground, nor any ground
but English,

Where his cathedral stands. Mine
old friend, Thomas,

I would there were that perfect
trust between us,

That health of heart, once ours, ere
Pope or King

Had come between us! Even now—
who knows?—

I might deliver all things to thy
hand—

If . . . but I say no more . . . fare-
well, my lord.

Becket. Farewell, my liege!

[*Exit Henry, then the Barons and
Bishops.*]

Walter Map. There again! when
the full fruit of the royal promise
might have dropt into thy mouth
hadst thou but opened it to thank
him.

Becket. He fenced his royal prom-
ise with an *if*.

Walter Map. And is the King's *if*
too high a stile for your lordship to
overstep and come at all things in
the next field?

Becket. Ay, if this *if* be like the
Devil's '*if*'

Thou wilt fall down and worship me.'

Herbert. Oh, Thomas,
I could fall down and worship thee,
my Thomas,

For thou hast trodden this wine-press
alone.

Becket. Nay, of the people there
are many with me.

Walter Map. I am not altogether
with you, my lord, tho' I am none of
those that would raise a storm be-
tween you, lest ye should draw to-
gether like two ships in a calm. You
wrong the King: he meant what he
said to-day. Who shall vouch for his
to-morrows? One word further.
Doth not the *fewness* of anything
make the fulness of it in estimation?
Is not virtue prized mainly for its ra-
rity and great baseness loathed as an
exception: for were all, my lord, as
noble as yourself, who would look up
to you? and were all as base as—who
shall I say—Fitzurse and his follow-
ing—who would look down upon
them? My lord, you have put so
many of the King's household out of
communion, that they begin to smile
at it.

Becket. At their peril, at their
peril—

Walter Map. —For tho' the drop
may hollow out the dead stone, doth
not the living skin thicken against
perpetual whippings? This is the
second grain of good counsel I ever
proffered thee, and so cannot suffer by
the rule of frequency. Have I sown it

in salt? I trust not, for before God I promise you the King hath many more wolves than he can tame in his woods of England, and if it suit their purpose to howl for the King, and you still move against him, you may have no less than to die for it; but God and his free wind grant your lordship a happy home-return and the King's kiss of peace in Kent. Farewell! I must follow the King. *[Exit.]*

Herbert. Ay, and I warrant the customs. Did the King
Speak of the customs?

Becket. No!—to die for it—
I live to die for it, I die to live for it.
The State will die, the Church can
never die.

The King's not like to die for that
which dies;

But I must die for that which never
dies.

It will be so—my visions in the
Lord:

It must be so, my friend! the wolves
of England

Must murder her one shepherd, that
the sheep

May feed in peace. False figure, Map
would say.

Earth's falses are heaven's truths.
And when my voice

Is martyr'd mute, and this man disap-
pears,

That perfect trust may come again be-
tween us,

And there, there, there, not here I
shall rejoice

To find my stray sheep back within
the fold.

The crowd are scattering, let us move
away!

And thence to England. *[Exeunt.]*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—THE OUTSKIRTS OF
THE BOWER.

Geoffrey (coming out of the wood).
Light again! light again! Margery?

no, that's a finer thing there. How it
glitters!

Eleanor (entering). Come to me,
little one. How camest thou hither?

Geoffrey. On my legs.

Eleanor. And mighty pretty legs
too. Thou art the prettiest child I
ever saw. Wilt thou love me?

Geoffrey. No; I only love mother.

Eleanor. Ay; and who is thy
mother?

Geoffrey. They call her— But
she lives secret, you see.

Eleanor. Why?

Geoffrey. Don't know why.

Eleanor. Ay, but some one comes
to see her now and then. Who
is he?

Geoffrey. Can't tell.

Eleanor. What does she call him?

Geoffrey. My liege.

Eleanor. Pretty one, how camest
thou?

Geoffrey. There was a bit of yellow
silk here and there, and it looked
pretty like a glowworm, and I thought
if I followed it I should find the
fairies.

Eleanor. I am the fairy, pretty
one, a good fairy to thy mother.
Take me to her.

Geoffrey. There are good fairies
and bad fairies, and sometimes she
cries, and can't sleep sound o' nights
because of the bad fairies.

Eleanor. She shall cry no more;
she shall sleep sound enough if thou
wilt take me to her. I am her good
fairy.

Geoffrey. But you don't look like a
good fairy. Mother does. You are
not pretty, like mother.

Eleanor. We can't all of us be as
pretty as thou art—*(aside)* little bas-
tard. Come, here is a golden chain I
will give thee if thou wilt lead me to
thy mother.

Geoffrey. No—no gold. Mother
says gold spoils all. Love is the only
gold.

Eleanor. I love thy mother, my
pretty boy. Show me where thou
camest out of the wood.

Geoffrey. By this tree; but I don't know if I can find the way back again.

Eleanor. Where's the warder?

Geoffrey. Very bad. Somebody struck him.

Eleanor. Ay? who was that?

Geoffrey. Can't tell. But I heard say he had had a stroke, or you'd have heard his horn before now. Come along, then? we shall see the silk here and there, and I want my supper.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—ROSAMUND'S BOWER.

Rosamund. The boy so late; pray God, he be not lost.

I sent this Margery, and she comes not back;

I sent another, and she comes not back.

I go myself—so many alleys, crossings,

Paths, avenues—nay, if I lost him, now

The folds have fallen from the mystery,

And left all naked, I were lost indeed.

Enter GEOFFREY and ELEANOR.

Geoffrey, the pain thou hast put me to!

[*Seeing Eleanor.* Ha, you!

How came you hither?

Eleanor. Your own child brought me hither!

Geoffrey. You said you couldn't trust Margery, and I watched her and followed her into the woods, and I lost her and went on and on till I found the light, and the lady, and she says she can make you sleep o' nights.

Rosamund. How dared you?

Know you not this bower is secret,

Of and belonging to the King of England,

More sacred than his forests for the chase?

Nay, nay, Heaven help you; get you hence in haste

Lest worse befall you.

Eleanor. Child, I am mine own self

Of and belonging to the King. The King

Hath divers ofs and ons, ofs and belongings,

Almost as many as your true Mussulman—

Belongings, paramours, whom it pleases him

To call his wives; but so it chances, child,

That I am his main paramour, his sultana.

But since the fondest pair of doves will jar,

Ev'n in a cage of gold, we had words of late,

And thereupon he call'd my children bastards.

Do you believe that you are married to him?

Rosamund. I should believe it.

Eleanor. You must not believe it, Because I have a wholesome medicine here

Puts that belief asleep. Your answer, beauty!

Do you believe that you are married to him?

Rosamund. Geoffrey, my boy, I saw the ball you lost in the fork of the great willow over the brook. Go. See that you do not fall in. Go.

Geoffrey. And leave you alone with the good fairv. She calls you beauty, but I don't like her looks. Well, you bid me go, and I'll have my ball anyhow. Shall I find you asleep when I come back?

Rosamund. Go. [*Exit Geoffrey.*]

Eleanor. He is easily found again. Do you believe it?

I pray you then to take my sleeping-draught;

But if you should not care to take it—see!

[*Draws a dagger.* What! have I scared the red rose from your face

Into your heart? But this will find it there;

And dig it from the root for ever.

Rosamund. Help! help!

Eleanor. They say that walls have ears; but these, it seems, Have none! and I have none—to pity thee.

Rosamund. I do beseech you—my child is so young, So backward too; I cannot leave him yet.

I am not so happy I could not die myself,

But the child is so young. You have children—his; And mine is the King's child; so, if you love him—

Nay, if you love him, there is great wrong done

Somehow; but if you do not—there are those

Who say you do not love him—let me go

With my young boy, and I will hide my face,

Blacken and gipsyfy it; none shall know me;

The King shall never hear of me again,

But I will beg my bread along the world

With my young boy, and God will be our guide.

I never meant you harm in any way.

See, I can say no more.

Eleanor. Will you not say you are not married to him?

Rosamund. Ay, Madam, I can say it, if you will.

Eleanor. Then is thy pretty boy a bastard?

Rosamund. No.

Eleanor. And thou thyself a proven wanton?

Rosamund. No.

I am none such. I never loved but one.

I have heard of such that range from love to love,

Like the wild beast—if you can call it love.

I have heard of such—yea, even among those

Who sit on thrones—I never saw any such,

Never knew any such, and howsoever You do misname me, match'd with any such,

I am snow to mud.

Eleanor. The more the pity then That thy true home—the heavens—cry out for thee

Who art too pure for earth.

Enter FITZURSE.

Fitzurse. Give her to me.

Eleanor. The Judas-lover of our passion-play Hath track'd us hither.

Fitzurse. Well, why not? I follow'd

You and the child: he babbled all the way.

Give her to me to make my honey-moon.

Eleanor. Ay, as the bears love honey. Could you keep her

Indungeon'd from one whisper of the wind,

Dark even from a side glance of the moon,

And oublietted in the centre—No!

I follow out my hate and thy revenge.

Fitzurse. You bad me take revenge another way—

To bring her to the dust. . . Come with me, love,

And I will love thee. . . . Madam, let her live.

I have a far-off burrow where the King

Would miss her and for ever.

Eleanor. How sayst thou, sweetheart?

Wilt thou go with him? he will marry thee.

Rosamund. Give me the poison; set me free of him!

[*Eleanor offers the vial*
No, no! I will not have it.

Eleanor. Then this other, The wiser choice, because my sleeping-draught

May bloat thy beauty out of shape, and make

Thy body loathsome even to thy child;

While this but leaves thee with a
broken heart,
A doll-face blanch'd and bloodless,
over which
If pretty Geoffrey do not break his
own,
It must be broken for him.

Rosamund. O I see now
Your purpose is to fright me—a
troubadour
You play with words. You had never
used so many,
Not if you meant it, I am sure. The
child . . .
No . . . mercy! No! (*Kneels.*)

Eleanor. Play! . . . that
bosom never
Heaved under the King's hand with
such true passion
As at this loveless knife that stirs the
riot,

Which it will quench in blood!
Slave, if he love thee,
Thy life is worth the wrestle for it:
arise,

And dash thyself against me that I
may slay thee!
The worm! shall I let her go? But
ha! what's here?

By very God, the cross I gave the
King!

His village darling in some lewd caress
Has wheedled it off the King's neck to
her own.

By thy leave, beauty. Ay, the same!
I warrant

Thou hast sworn on this my cross a
hundred times
Never to leave him—and that merits
death,

False oath on holy cross—for thou
must leave him

To-day, but not quite yet. My good
Fitzurse,

The running down the chase is kind-
lier sport

Ev'n than the death. Who knows
but that thy lover

May plead so pitifully, that I may
spare thee?

Come hither, man stand there. (*To
Rosamund*) Take thy one
chance;

Catch at the last straw. Kneel to
thy lord Fitzurse;
Crouch even because thou hatest him;
fawn upon him
For thy life and thy son's.

Rosamund (rising). I am a Clif-
ford,

My son a Clifford and Plantagenet.
I am to die then, tho' there stand
beside thee

One who might grapple with thy
dagger, if he

Had aught of man, or thou of woman;
or I

Would bow to such a baseness as
would make me

Most worthy of it: both of us will die,
And I will fly with my sweet boy to
heaven,

And shriek to all the saints among the
stars.

'Eleanor of Aquitaine, Eleanor of
England!

Murder'd by that adulteress Eleanor,
Whose doings are a horror to the east,

A hissing in the west!' Have we
not heard

Raymond of Poitou, thine own uncle
—nay,

Geoffrey Plantagenet, thine own hus-
band's father—

Nay, ev'n the accursed heathen Salad-
deen—

Strike!

I challenge thee to meet me before
God.

Answer me there.

Eleanor (raising the dagger). This
in thy bosom, fool,

And after in thy bastard's!

*Enter BECKET from behind. Catches
hold of her arm.*

Becket. Murderess!

[*The dagger falls; they stare at
one another. After a pause.*

Eleanor. My lord, we know you
proud of your fine hand,

But having now admired it long
enough,

We find that it is mightier than it
seems—

At least mine own is frailer: you are laming it.

Becket. And lamed and maim'd to dislocation, better Than raised to take a life which Henry bad me Guard from the stroke that dooms thee after death To wail in deathless flame.

Eleanor. Nor you, nor I Have now to learn, my lord, that our good Henry Says many a thing in sudden heats, which he Gainsays by next sunrising—often ready To tear himself for having said as much.

My lord, Fitzurse—

Becket. He too! what dost thou here? Dares the bear slouch into the lion's den?

One downward plunge of his paw would rend away Eyesight and manhood, life itself, from thee.

Go, lest I blast thee with anathema, And make thee a world's horror.

Fitzurse. My lord, I shall Remember this.

Becket. I do remember thee; Lest I remember thee to the lion, go.

[*Exit Fitzurse.*]

Take up your dagger; put it in the sheath.

Eleanor. Might not your courtesy stoop to hand it me?

But crowns must bow when mitres sit so high.

Well—well—too costly to be left or lost.

[*Picks up the dagger.*]
I had it from an Arab soldan, who,

When I was there in Antioch, marvel'd at

Our unfamiliar beauties of the west; But wonder'd more at my much constancy

To the monk-king, Louis, our former burthen,

From whom, as being too kin, you know, my lord,

God's grace and Holy Church deliver'd us.

I think, time given, I could have talk'd him out of His ten wives into one. Look at the hilt.

What excellent workmanship. In our poor west

We cannot do it so well.

Becket. We can do worse. Madam, I saw your dagger at her throat;

I heard your savage cry.

Eleanor. Well acted, was it? A comedy meant to seem a tragedy—A feint, a farce. My honest lord, you are known

Thro' all the courts of Christendom as one

That mars a cause with over-violence.

You have wrong'd Fitzurse. I speak not of myself.

We thought to scare this minion of the King

Back from her churchless commerce with the King

To the fond arms of her first love, Fitzurse,

Who swore to marry her. You have spoilt the farce.

My savage cry? Why, she—she—when I strove

To work against her license for her good,

Bark'd out at me such monstrous charges, that

The King himself, for love of his own sons,

If hearing, would have spurn'd her; whereupon

I menaced her with this, as when we threaten

A yelp with a stick. Nay, I deny not

That I was somewhat anger'd. Do you hear me?

Believe or no, I care not. You have lost

The ear of the King. I have it. . .

My Lord Paramount,

Our great High-priest, will not your Holiness

Vouchsafe a gracious answer to your Queen?

Becket. Rosamund hath not answer'd you one word; Madam, I will not answer you one word

Daughter, the world hath trick'd thee. Leave it, daughter;

Come thou with me to Godstow nunnery,

And live what may be left thee of a life

Saved as by miracle alone with Him Who gave it.

Re-enter GEOFFREY.

Geoffrey. Mother, you told me a great fib: it wasn't in the willow.

Becket. Follow us, my son, and we will find it for thee—Or something manlier.

[*Exit.* Becket, Rosamund, and Geoffrey.

Eleanor. The world hath trick'd her—that's the King; if so,

There was the farce, the feint—not mine. And yet

I am all but sure my dagger was a feint

Till the worm turn'd—not life shot up in blood,

But death drawn in;—(looking at the *vial*) this was no feint then? no.

But can I swear to that, had she but given

Plain answer to plain query? nay, methinks

Had she but bow'd herself to meet the wave

Of humiliation, worshipt whom she loathed,

I should have let her be, scorn'd her too much

To harm her. Henry—Becket tells him this—

To take my life might lose him Aquitaine.

Too politic for that. Imprison me?

No, for it came to nothing—only a feint.

Did she not tell me I was playing on her?

I'll swear to mine own self it was a feint.

Why should I swear, Eleanor, who am, or was,

A sovereign power? The King plucks out their eyes

Who anger him, and shall not I, the Queen,

Tear out her heart—kill, kill with knife or venom

One of his slanderous harlots? 'None of such?'

I love her none the more. Tut, the chance gone,

She lives—but not for him; one point is gain'd.

O I, that thro' the Pope divorced King Louis,

Scorning his monkery,—I that wedded Henry,

Honoring his manhood—will he not mock at me

The jealous fool balk'd of her will—with him?

But he and he must never meet again.

Reginald Fitzurse!

Re-enter FITZURSE.

Fitzurse. Here, Madam, at your p'asure.

Eleanor. My pleasure is to have a man about me.

Why did you sink away so like a cur?

Fitzurse. Madam, I am as much man as the King.

Madam, I fear Church-censures like your King.

Eleanor. He grovels to the Church when he's black-blooded,

But kinglike fought the proud archbishop,—kinglike

Defied the Pope, and, like his kingly sires,

The Normans, striving still to break or bind

The spiritual giant with our island laws

And customs, made me for the moment proud

Ev'n of that stale Charch-bond which
 link'd me with him
 To bear him kingly sons. I am not
 so sure
 But that I love him still. Thou as
 much man!
 No more of that; we will to France
 and be
 Beforehand with the King, and brew
 from out
 This Godstow-Becket intermeddling
 such
 A strong hate-philtre as may madden
 him—madden
 Against his priest beyond all helle-
 bore.

ACT V.

SCENE I.—CASTLE IN NORMANDY.
 KING'S CHAMBER.

HENRY, ROGER OF YORK, FOLIOT,
 JOCELYN OF SALISBURY.

Roger of York. Nay, nay, my liege,
 He rides abroad with armed followers,
 Hath broken all his promises to thy-
 self,
 Cursed and anathematized us right
 and left,
 Stir'd up a party there against your
 son—

Henry. Roger of York, you always
 hated him,
 Even when you both were boys at
 Theobald's.

Roger of York. I always hated
 boundless arrogance.
 In mine own cause I strove against
 him there,
 And in thy cause I strive against him
 now.

Henry. I cannot think he moves
 against my son,
 Knowing right well with what a
 tenderness
 He loved my son.

Roger of York. Before you made
 him king.
 But Becket ever moves against a king.
 The Church is all—the crime to be a
 king.

We trust your Royal Grace, lord of
 more land
 Than any crown in Europe, will not
 yield
 To lay your neck beneath your citi-
 zen's heel.

Henry. Not to a Gregory of my
 throning! No.

Foliot. My royal liege, in aiming
 at your love,

It may be sometimes I have overshot
 My duties to our Holy Mother
 Church,

Tho' all the world allows I fall no
 inch

Behind this Becket, rather go beyond
 In scourgings, macerations, mortify-
 ings,

Fasts, disciplines that clear the spir-
 itual eye,

And break the soul from earth. Let
 all that be.

I boast not: but you know thro' all
 this quarrel

I still have cleaved to the crown, in
 hope the crown

Would cleave to me that but obey'd
 the crown,

Crowning your son; for which our
 loyal service,

And since we likewise swore to obey
 the customs,

York and myself, and our good Salis-
 bury here,

Are push'd from out communion of
 the Church.

Jocelyn of Salisbury. Becket hath
 trodden on us like worms, my
 liege;

Trodden one half dead; one half, but
 half-alive,

Cries to the King.

Henry (aside). Take care o' thy-
 self, O King.

Jocelyn of Salisbury. Being so
 crush'd and so humiliated

We scarcely dare to bless the food
 we eat

Because of Becket.

Henry. What would ye have me
 do?

Roger of York. Summon your
 barons; take their counsel; yet

I know—could swear—as long as
Becket breathes,
Your Grace will never have one quiet
hour.

Henry. What? . . . Ay . . . but
pray you do not work upon
me.

I see your drift . . . it may be so . . .
and yet

You know me easily anger'd. Will
you hence?

He shall absolve you . . . you shall
have redress.

I have a dizzying headache. Let me
rest.

I'll call you by and by.

[*Exeunt* Roger of York, Foliot,
and Jocelyn of Salisbury.

Would he were dead! I have lost all
love for him.

If God would take him in some sud-
den way—

Would he were dead. [*Lies down.*

Page [*entering*]. My liege, the
Queen of England.

Henry. God's eyes! [*Starting up.*

Enter ELEANOR.

Eleanor. Of England? Say of
Aquitaine.

I am no Queen of England. I had
dream'd

I was the bride of England, and a
queen.

Henry. And,—while you dream'd
you were the bride of Eng-
land,—

Stirring her baby-king against me?
ha!

Eleanor. The brideless Becket is
thy king and mine:

I will go live and die in Aquitaine.

Henry. Except I clap thee into
prison here,

Lest thou shouldst play the wanton
there again.

Ha, you of Aquitaine! O you of
Aquitaine!

You were but Aquitaine to Louis—
no wife;

You are only Aquitaine to me—no
wife.

Eleanor. And why, my lord, should
I be wife to one

That only wedded me for Aquitaine?
Yet this no wife—her six and thirty
sail

Of Provence blew you to your Eng-
lish throne;

And this no wife has born you four
brave sons,

And one of them at least is like to
prove

Bigger in our small world than thou
art.

Henry. Ay—

Richard, if he be mine—I hope him
mine.

But thou art like enough to make
him thine.

Eleanor. Becket is like enough to

make all his.

Henry. Methought I had recover'd
of the Becket,

That all was planed and bevell'd
smooth again,

Save from some hateful cantrip of
thine own.

Eleanor. I will go live and die in
Aquitaine.

I dream'd I was the consort of a
king,

Not one whose back his priest has
broken.

Henry. What!

Is the end come? You, will you
crown my foe

My victor in mid-battle? I will be
Sole master of my house. The end

is mine.

What game, what juggle, what
devilry are you playing?

Why do you thrust this Becket on
me again?

Eleanor. Why? for I am true
wife, and have my fears

Lest Becket thrust you even from
your throne.

Do you know this cross, my liege?

Henry [*turning his head*]. Away!
Not I.

Eleanor. Not ev'n the central dia-
mond, worth, I think,

Half of the Antioch whence I had it.
Henry. That?

Eleanor. I gave it you, and you
your paramour;
She sends it back, as being dead to
earth,
So dead henceforth to you.

Henry. Dead! you have murder'd
her,
Found out her secret bower and mur-
der'd her.

Eleanor. Your Becket knew the
secret of your bower.

Henry (calling out). Ho there! thy
rest of life is hopeless prison.

Eleanor. And what would my own
Aquitaine say to that?
First, free thy captive from her hope-
less prison.

Henry. O devil, can I free her
from the grave?

Eleanor. You are too tragic: both
of us are players
In such a comedy as our court of Prov-
ence

Had laugh'd at. That's a delicate
Latin lay

Of Walter Map: the lady holds the
cleric

Lovelier than any soldier, his poor
tonsure

A crown of Empire. Will you have
it again?

(*Offering the cross. He dashes it
down.*)

St. Cupid, that is too irreverent.
Then mine once more. (*Puts it on.*)

Your cleric hath your lady.
Nay, what uncomely faces, could he
see you!

Foam at the mouth because King
Thomas, lord

Not only of your vassals but
amours,

Thro' chastest honor of the Deca-
logue

Hath used the full authority of his
Church

To put her into Godstow nunnery.

Henry. To put her into Godstow
nunnery!

He dared not—liar! yet, yet I remem-
ber—

I do remember.

He bad me put her into a nunnery—

Into Godstow, into Hellstow, Devil-
stow!

The Church! the Church!
God's eyes! I would the Church
were down in hel! [*Exit.*]

Eleanor. Aha!

Enter the four KNIGHTS.

Fitzurse. What made the King cry
out so furiously?

Eleanor. Our Becket, who will not
absolve the Bishops.

I think ye four have cause to love
this Becket.

Fitzurse. I hate him for his inso-
lence to all.

De Tracy. And I for all his inso-
lence to thee.

De Brito. I hate him for I hate
him is my reason,

And yet I hate him for a hypocrite.
De Morville. I do not love him,

for he did his best
To break the barons, and now braves
the King.

Eleanor. Strike, then, at once, the
King would have him—See!

Re-enter HENRY.

Henry. No man to love me, honor
me, obey me!

Sluggards and fools!

The slave that eat my bread has
kick'd his King!

The dog I cramm'd with dainties
worried me!

The fellow that on a lame jade came
to court,

A ragged cloak for saddle—he, he,
he,

To shake my throne, to push into my
chamber—

My bed, where ev'n the slave is priv-
ate—he—

I'll have her out again, he shall
absolve

The bishops—they but did my will—
not you—

Sluggards and fools, why do you
stand and stare?

You are no King's men—you—you—
you are Becket's men.

Down with King Henry! up with
the Archbishop!

Will no man free me from this pesti-
lent priest? *[Exit.*

[The Knights draw their swords.

Eleanor. Are ye king's men? I
am king's woman, I.

The Knights. King's men! King's
men!

SCENE II.—A ROOM IN CANTER-
BURY MONASTERY.

BECKET and JOHN OF SALISBURY.

Becket. York said so?

John of Salisbury. Yes: a man
may take good counsel
Ev'n from his foe.

Becket. York will say anything.
What is he saying now? gone to the
King

And taken our anathema with him.
York!

Can the King de-anathematize this
York?

John of Salisbury. Thomas, I
would thou hadst return'd to
England,

Like some wise prince of this world
from his wars,

With more of olive-branch and am-
nesty

For foes at home—thou hast raised
the world against thee.

Becket. Why, John, my kingdom
is not of this world.

John of Salisbury. If it were more
of this world it might be

More of the next. A policy of wise
pardon

Wins here as well as there. To bless
thine enemies—

Becket. Ay, mine, not Heaven's.

John of Salisbury. And may there
not be something

Of this world's leaven in thee too,
when crying

On Holy Church to thunder out her
rights

And thine own wrong so pitilessly?
Ah, Thomas.

The lightnings that we think are only
Heaven's

Flash sometimes out of earth against
the heavens.

The soldier, when he lets his whole
self go

Lost in the common good, the com-
mon wrong,

Strikes truest ev'n for his own self.
I crave

Thy pardon—I have still thy leave to
speak.

Thou hast waged God's war against
the King; and yet

We are self-uncertain creatures, and
we may,

Yea, even when we know not, mix
our spites

And private hates with our defence of
Heaven.

Enter EDWARD GRIM.

Becket. Thou art but yesterday
from Cambridge, Grim;

What say ye there of Becket?

Grim. I believe him

The bravest in our roll of Primates
down

From Austin—there are some—for
there are men

Of canker'd judgment everywhere—

Becket. Who hold

With York, with York against me.

Grim. Well, my lord,

A stranger monk desires access to
you.

Becket. York against Canterbury,
York against God!

I am open to him. *[Exit Grim.]*

Enter ROSAMUND as a Monk.

Rosamund. Can I speak with you
Alone, my father?

Becket. Come you to confess?

Rosamund. Not now.

Becket. Then speak; this

is my other self,

Who like my conscience never lets
me be.

Rosamund (throwing back the cowl).

I know him; our good John of
Salisbury.

Becket. Breaking already from thy noviciate
To plunge into this bitter world again—
These wells of Marah. I am grieved,
my daughter.
I thought that I had made a peace for thee.

Rosamund. Small peace was mine
in my noviciate, father.
Thro' all closed doors a dreadful
whisper crept
That thou wouldst excommunicate the King.
I could not eat, sleep, pray: I had
with me
The monk's disguise thou gavest me
for my bower:
I think our Abbess knew it and allow'd
it.

I fled, and found thy name a charm to
get me
Food, roof, and rest. I met a robber
once,
I told him I was bound to see the
Archbishop;
'Pass on,' he said, and in thy name I
pass'd
From house to house. In one a son
stone-blind
Sat by his mother's hearth: he had
gone too far
Into the King's own woods; and the
poor mother,
Soon as she learnt I was a friend of
thine,
Cried out against the cruelty of the
King.
I said it was the King's courts, not
the King;
But she would not believe me, and she
wish'd
The Church were king: she had seen
the Archbishop once,
So mild, so kind. The people love
thee, father.

Becket. Alas! when I was Chan-
cellor to the King,
I fear I was as cruel as the King.

Rosamund. Cruel? Oh, no—it is
the law, not he;
The customs of the realm.

Becket. The customs! customs!

Rosamund. My lord, you have not
excommunicated him?

Oh, if you have, absolve him!

Becket. Daughter, daughter,
Deal not with things you know not.

Rosamund. I know him.
Then you have done it, and I call you
cruel.

John of Salisbury. No, daughter,
you mistake our good Arch-
bishop;

For once in France the King had
been so harsh,

He thought to excommunicate him—
Thomas,

You could not—old affection master'd
you,

You falter'd into tears.

Rosamund. God bless him for
it.

Becket. Nay, make me not a wo-
man, John of Salisbury,

Nor make me traitor to my holy office.
Did not a man's voice ring along the
aisle,

'The King is sick and almost unto
death.'

How could I excommunicate him then?

Rosamund. And wilt thou excom-
municate him now?

Becket. Daughter, my time is short,
I shall not do it.

And were it longer—well—I should
not do it.

Rosamund. Thanks in this life,
and in the life to come.

Becket. Get thee back to thy nun-
nery with all haste;

Let this be thy last trespass. But
one question—

How fares thy pretty boy, the little
Geoffrey?

No fever, cough, croup, sickness?

Rosamund. No, but saved
From all that by our solitude. The
plagues

That smite the city spare the solitudes.

Becket. God save him from all
sickness of the soul!

Thee too, thy solitude among thy
nuns,

May that save thee! Doth he remem-
ber me?

Rosamund. I warrant him.

Becket. He is marvellously like thee.

Rosamund. Likier the King.

Becket. No, daughter.

Rosamund. Ay, but wait
Till his nose rises; he will be very king.

Becket. Ev'n so: but think not of the King: farewell!

Rosamund. My lord, the city is full of armed men.

Becket. Ev'n so: farewell!

Rosamund. I will but pass to vesters,
And breathe one prayer for my liege-
lord the King,
His child and mine own soul, and so
return.

Becket. Pray for me too: much
need of prayer have I.

[*Rosamund kneels and goes.*
Dan John, how much we lose, we cel-
lates,
Lacking the love of woman and of
child.

John of Salisbury. More gain than
loss; for of your wives you shall
Find one a slut whose fairest linen
seems

Foul as her dust-cloth, if she used it
—one

So charged with tongue, that every
thread of thought

Is broken ere it joins—a shrew to
boot,

Whose evil song far on into the
night

Thrills to the topmost tile—no hope
but death;

One slow, fat, white, a burthen of the
hearth;

And one that being thwarted ever
swoons

And weeps herself into the place of
power;

And one an *uxor pauperis Ibyci*.
So rare the household honeymaking
bee,

Man's help! but we, we have the
Blessed Virgin

For worship, and our Mother Church
for bride;

And all the souls we saved and
father'd here
Will greet us as our babes in Para-
dise.

What noise was that? she told us of
arm'd men
Here in the city. Will you not with-
draw?

Becket. I once was out with Henry
in the days

When Henry loved me, and we came
upon

A wild-fowl sitting on her nest, so
still

I reach'd my hand and touch'd; she
did not stir;

The snow had frozen round her, and
she sat

Stone-dead upon a heap of ice-cold
eggs.

Look! how this love, this mother,
runs thro' all

The world God made—even the beast
—the bird!

John of Salisbury. Ay, still a lover
of the beast and bird?

But these arm'd men—will you not
hide yourself?

Perchance the fierce De Brocs from
Saltwood Castle,

To assail our Holy Mother lest she
brood

Too long o'er this hard egg, the
world, and send

Her whole heart's heat into it, till it
break

Into young angels. Pray you, hide
yourself.

Becket. There was a little fair-
hair'd Norman maid

Lived in my mother's house: if Rosa-
mund is

The world's rose, as her name imports
her—she

Was the world's lily.

John of Salisbury. Ay, and what of
her?

Becket. She died of leprosy.

John of Salisbury. I know not why
You call these old things back again,
my lord.

Becket. The drowning man, they
say, remembers all

The chances of his life, just ere he dies.

John of Salisbury. Ay—but these arm'd men—will you drown yourself?

He loses half the meed of martyrdom
Who will be martyr when he might escape.

Becket. What day of the week?
Tuesday?

John of Salisbury. Tuesday, my lord.

Becket. On a Tuesday was I born,
and on a Tuesday
Baptized; and on a Tuesday did I fly
Forth from Northampton; on a Tuesday pass'd

From England into bitter banishment;

On a Tuesday at Pontigny came to me

The ghostly warning of my martyrdom;

On a Tuesday from mine exile I return'd,

And on a Tuesday—

[*Tracy enters, then Fitzurse, De Brito, and De Morville. Monks following.*

—on a Tuesday— Tracy!
(*A long silence broken by Fitzurse saying, contemptuously,*
God help thee!

John of Salisbury (aside). How the good Archbishop reddens!

He never yet could brook the note of scorn.

Fitzurse. My lord, we bring a message from the King
Beyond the water; will you have it alone,

Or with these listeners near you?

Becket. As you will.

Fitzurse. Nay, as you will.

Becket. Nay, as you will.

John of Salisbury. Why then
Better perhaps to speak with them apart.

Let us withdraw.

[*All go out except the four Knights and Becket.*

Fitzurse. We are all alone with him.

Shall I not smite him with his own cross-staff?

De Morville. No, look! the door is open: let him be.

Fitzurse. The King condemns your excommunicating—

Becket. This is no secret, but a public matter.

In here again!

[*John of Salisbury and Monks return.*

Now, sirs, the King's commands!

Fitzurse. The King beyond the water, thro' our voices,
Commands you to be dutiful and leal

To your young King on this side of the water,

Not scorn him for the foibles of his youth.

What! you would make his coronation void

By cursing those who crown'd him.
Out upon you!

Becket. Reginald, all men know I loved the Prince.

His father gave him to my care, and I became his second father: he had his faults,

For which I would have laid mine own life down

To help him from them, since indeed I loved him,

And love him next after my lord his father.

Rather than dim the splendor of his crown

I fain would treble and quadruple it
With revenues, realms, and golden provinces

So that were done in equity.

Fitzurse. You have broken
Your bond of peace, your treaty with the King—

Wakening such brawls and loud disturbances

In England, that he calls you oversea
To answer for it in his Norman courts.

Becket. Prate not of bonds, for never, oh, never again

Shall the waste voice of the bond-breaking sea

Divide me from the mother church of
England.

My Canterbury. Loud disturbances!
Oh, ay—the bells rang out even to
deafening.

Organ and pipe, and dulcimer, chants
and hymns

In all the churches, trumpets in the
halls.

Sobs, laughter, cries: they spread
their raiment down

Before me—would have made my
pathway flowers.

Save that it was mid-winter in the
street.

But full mid-summer in those honest
hearts.

Fitzurse. The King commands you
to absolve the bishops

Whom you have excommunicated.

Becket. 1?

Not I, the Pope. Ask *him* for abso-
lution.

Fitzurse. But you advised the
Pope.

Becket. And so I did.
They have but to submit.

The four Knights. The King com-
mands you.

We are all King's men.

Becket. King's men at least
should know

That their own King closed with me
last July

That I should pass the censures of the
Church

On those that crown'd young Henry
in this realm,

And trampled on the rights of Can-
terbury.

Fitzurse. What! dare you charge
the King with treachery?

He sanction thee to excommunicate
The prelates whom he chose to crown
his son!

Becket. I spake no word of treach-
ery, Reginald.

But for the truth of this I make
appeal

To all the archbishops, bishops, pre-
lates, barons,

Monks, knights, five hundred, that
were there and heard.

Nay, you yourself were there: you
heard yourself.

Fitzurse. I was not there.

Becket. I saw you there.

Fitzurse. I was not.

Becket. You were. I never forget
anything.

Fitzurse. He makes the King a
traitor, me a liar.

How long shall we forbear him?

John of Salisbury (*drawing Becket
aside.*) O my good lord,

Speak with them privately on this
hereafter.

You see they have been revelling, and
I fear

Are braced and brazened up with
Christmas wines

For any murderous brawl.

Becket. And yet they prate

Of mine, my brawls, when those, that
name themselves

Of the King's part, have broken down
our barns,

Wasted our diocese, outraged our ten-
ants,

Lifted our produce, driven our clerics
out—

Why they, your friends, those ruffians,
the De Brocs,

They stood on Dover beach to mur-
der me,

They slew my stags in mine own
manor here,

Mutilated, poor brute, my sumpter-
mule,

Plunder'd the vessel full of Gascon
wine,

The old King's present, carried off
the casks,

Kill'd half the crew, dungeon'd the
other half

In Pevensey Castle—

De Morville. Why not rather
then,

If this be so, complain to your young
King.

Not punish of your own authority?

Becket. Mine enemies barr'd all
access to the boy.

The knew he loved me.

Hugo, Hugh, how proudly you exalt
your head!

Nay, when they seek to overturn our rights,
I ask no leave of king, or mortal man,
To set them straight again. Alone I do it.

Give to the King the things that are the King's,
And those of God to God.

Fitzurse. Threats! threats! ye hear him.

What! will he excommunicate all the world?

[*The Knights come round Becket.*

De Tracy. He shall not.

De Brito. Well, as yet—I should be grateful—

He hath not excommunicated me.

Becket. Because thou wast born excommunicate.

I never spied in thee one gleam of grace.

De Brito. Your Christian's Christian charity!

Becket. By St. Denis—

De Brito. Ay, by St. Denis, now will he flame out,

And lose his head as old St. Denis did.

Becket. Ye think to scare me from my loyalty

To God and to the Holy Father. No!

Tho' all the swords in England flash'd above me

Ready to fall at Henry's word or yours—

Tho' all the loud-lung'd trumpets upon earth

Blared from the heights of all the thrones of her kings,

Blowing the world against me, I would stand

Clothed with the full authority of Rome,

Mail'd in the perfect panoply of faith,
First of the foremost of their files, who die

For God, to people heaven in the great day

When God makes up his jewels. Once I fled—

Never again, and you—I marvel at you—

Ye know what is between us. Ye have sworn

Yourselves my men when I was Chancellor—

My vassals—and yet threaten your Archbishop

In his own house.

Knights. Nothing can be between us

That goes against our fealty to the King.

Fitzurse. And in his name we charge you that ye keep

This traitor from escaping.

Becket. Rest you easy, For I am easy to keep. I shall not fly.

Here, here, here will you find me.

De Morville. Know you not You have spoken to the peril of your life?

Becket. As I shall speak again.

Fitzurse, De Tracy, and De Brito. To arms!

[*They rush out, De Morville lingers.*

Becket. De Morville, I had thought so well of you; and even now

You seem the least assassin of the four.

Oh, do not damn yourself for company!

Is it too late for me to save your soul?

I pray you for one moment stay and speak.

De Morville. Becket, it is too late.

Becket. Is it too late? [Exit.

Too late on earth may be too soon in hell.

Knights (in the distance). Close the great gate—ho, there—

upon the town.

Becket's Retainers. Shut the hall-doors. [A pause.

Becket. You hear them, brother John;

Why do you stand so silent, brother John?

John of Salisbury. For I was musing on an ancient saw,

Snawiter in modo, fortiter in re,
Is strength less strong when hand-in-
hand with grace?

Gratior in pulchro corpore virtus.

Thomas,

Why should you heat yourself for such
as these?

Becket. Methought I answer'd
moderately enough.

John of Salisbury. As one that blows
the coal to cool the fire.

My lord, I marvel why you never
lean

On any man's advising but your own.

Becket. Is it so, Dan John? well,
what should I have done?

John of Salisbury. You should have
taken counsel with your friends
Before these bandits brake into your
presence.

They seek—you make—occasion for
your death.

Becket. My counsel is already
taken, John.

I am prepared to die.

John of Salisbury. We are sinners
all,

The best of all not all-prepared to
die.

Becket. God's will be done!

John of Salisbury. Ay, well.

God's will be done!

Grim (re-entering). My lord, the
knights are arming in the gar-
den

Beneath the sycamore.

Becket. Good! let them arm.

Grim. And one of the De Brocs is
with them, Robert,
The apostate monk that was with Ran-
dulf here.

He knows the twists and turnings of
the place.

Becket. No fear!

Grim. No fear, my lord.

[*Crashes on the hall-doors. The
Monks flee.*]

Becket. (rising). Our dove-cote
flown!

I cannot tell why monks should all be
cowards.

John of Salisbury. Take refuge in
your own cathedral, Thomas.

Becket. Do they not fight the
Great Fiend day by day?

Valor and holy life should go to-
gether.

Why should all monks be cowards?

John of Salisbury. Are they so?
I say, take refuge in your own cath-
edral.

Becket. Ay, but I told them I
would wait them here.

Grim. May they not say you dared
not show yourself

In your old place? and vespers are
beginning.

[*Bell rings for vespers till end of
scene.*]

You should attend the office, give
them heart.

They fear you slain: they dread they
know not what.

Becket. Ay, monks, not men.

Grim. I am a monk, my lord.
Perhaps, my lord, you wrong us.

Some would stand by you to the death.

Becket. Your pardon.

John of Salisbury. He said, 'Attend
the office.'

Becket. Attend the office?

Why then—The Cross!—who bears
my Cross before me?

Methought they would have brain'd
me with it, John. [*Grim takes it.*]

Grim. I! Would that I could
bear thy cross indeed!

Becket. The Mitre!

John of Salisbury. Will you wear
it?—there!

[*Becket puts on the mitre.*]

Becket. The Pall!

I go to meet my King!

[*Puts on the pall.*]

Grim. To meet the King?

[*Crashes on the doors as they go out.*]

John of Salisbury. Why do you
move with such a stateliness?

Can you not hear them yonder like a
storm,

Battering the doors, and breaking thro'
the walls?

Becket. Why do the heathen rage?

My two good friends,
What matters murder'd here, or mur-
der'd there?

And yet my dream foretold my
martyrdom
In mine own church. It is God's will.
Go on.
Nay, drag me not. We must not
seem to fly.

SCENE III.—NORTH TRANSEPT OF
CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL.

On the right hand a flight of steps leading to the Choir, another flight on the left, leading to the North Aisle. Winter afternoon slowly darkening. Low thunder now and then of an approaching storm. MONKS heard chanting the service. ROSAMUND kneeling.

Rosamund. O blessed saint, O
glorious Benedict,—
These arm'd men in the city, these
fierce faces—
Thy holy follower founded Canter-
bury—
Save that dear head which now is
Canterbury,
Save him, he saved my life, he saved
my child,
Save him, his blood would darken
Henry's name;
Save him till all as saintly as thy-
self
He miss the searching flame of purga-
tory,
And pass at once perfect to Paradise.
[*Noise of steps and voices in the
cloisters.*

Hark! Is it they? Coming! He
is not here—

Not yet, thank heaven. O save him!

[*Goes up steps leading to choir.*

Becket (*entering, forced along by
John of Salisbury and Grim*).
No, I tell you!

I cannot bear a hand upon my person,
Why do you force me thus against
my will?

Grim. My lord, we force you from
your enemies.

Becket. As you would force a king
from being crown'd.

John of Salisbury. We must not
force the crown of martyrdom.
[*Service stops. Monks come down
from the stairs that lead to the
choir.*

Monks. Here is the great Arch-
bishop! He lives! he lives!
Die with him, and be glorified to-
gether.

Becket. Together? . . . get
you back! go on with the
office.

Monks. Come, then, with us to
vespers.

Becket. How can I come
When you so block the entry? Back,
I say!

Go on with the office. Shall not
Heaven be served

Tho' earth's last earthquake clash'd
the minster-bells,

And the great deeps were broken
up again,

And hiss'd against the sun?

[*Noise in the cloisters.*

Monks. The murderers, hark!
Let us hide! let us hide!

Becket. What do these people
fear?

Monks. Those arm'd men in the
cloister.

Becket. Be not such cravens!
I will go out and meet them.

Grim and others. Shut the doors!
We will not have him slain before our
face.

[*They close the doors of the tran-
sept. Knocking.*

Fly, fly, my lord, before they burst the
doors. [*Knocking.*

Becket. Why, these are our own
monks who follow'd us!

And will you bolt them out, and have
them slain?

Undo the doors: the church is not a
castle:

Knock, and it shall be open'd. Are
you deaf?

What, have I lost authority among
you?

Stand by, make way!

Opens the doors. Enter Monks
from cloister.

Come in, my friends, come in!
Nay, faster, faster!

Monks. Oh, my lord Archbishop,
A score of knights all arm'd with
swords and axes—
To the choir, to the choir!

[Monks divide, part flying by the stairs on the right, part by those on the left. The rush of these last bears Becket along with them some way up the steps, where he is left standing alone.]

Becket. Shall I too pass to the choir,
And die upon the Patriarchal throne
Of all my predecessors?

John of Salisbury. No, to the crypt!
Twenty steps down. Stumble not in the darkness,
Lest they should seize thee.

Grim. To the crypt? no—no,
To the chapel of St. Blaise beneath the roof!

John of Salisbury *(pointing upward and downward).* That way, or this! Save thyself either way.

Becket. Oh, no, not either way, nor any way
Save by that way which leads thro' night to light.

Not twenty steps, but one.
And fear not I should stumble in the darkness,

Not tho' it be their hour, the power of darkness,
But my hour too, the power of light in darkness!

I am not in the darkness but the light,
Seen by the Church in Heaven, the Church on earth—

The power of life in death to make her free!

[Enter the four Knights. John of Salisbury flies to the altar of St. Benedict.]

Fitzurse. Here, here, King's men!
[Catches hold of the last flying Monk.]

Where is the traitor Becket?

Monk. I am not he! I am not he, my lord.

I am not he indeed!

Fitzurse. Hence to the fiend!

[Pushes him away.]
Where is this treble traitor to the King?

De Tracy. Where is the Archbishop, Thomas Becket?

Becket. Here.
No traitor to the King, but Priest of God,
Primate of England.

[Descending into the transept.]

I am he ye seek.
What would ye have of me?

Fitzurse. Your life.

De Tracy. Your life.

De Morville. Save that you will absolve the bishops.

Becket. Never,—
Except they make submission to the Church.

You had my answer to that cry before.

De Morville. Why, then you are a dead man; flee!

Becket. I will not.
I am readier to be slain, than thou to slay.

Hugh, I know well thou hast but half a heart
To bathe this sacred pavement with my blood.

God pardon thee and these, but God's full curse

Shatter you all to pieces if ye harm One of my flock!

Fitzurse. Was not the great gate shut?

They are thronging in to vespers—half the town.

We shall be overwhelm'd. Seize him and carry him!

Come with us—nay—thou art our prisoner—come!

De Morville. Ay, make him prisoner, do not harm the man.

[Fitzurse lays hold of the Archbishop's pall.]

Becket. Touch me not!

De Brito. How the good priest gods himself!

He is not yet ascended to the Father.

Fitzurse. I will not only touch, but drag thee hence.

Becket. Thou art my man, thou art my vassal. Away!

[Flings him off till he reels, almost to falling.

Tracy (lays hold of the pall). Come; as he said, thou art our prisoner.

Becket. Down!

[Throws him headlong.

Fitzurse (advances with drawn sword). I told thee that I should remember thee!

Becket. Profligate pander!

Fitzurse. Do you hear that? strike, strike.

[Strikes off the Archbishop's mitre, and wounds him in the forehead.

Becket (covers his eyes with his hand).

I do commend my cause to God, the Virgin,

St. Denis of France and St. Alphege of England,

And all the tutelar Saints of Canterbury.

[Grim wraps his arms about the Archbishop.

Spare this defence, dear brother.

[Tracy has arisen, and approaches, hesitatingly, with his sword raised.

Fitzurse. Strike him, Tracy!

Rosamund (rushing down steps from the choir). No, No, No, No!

Fitzurse. This wanton here. De Morville,

Hold her away.

De Morville. I hold her.

Rosamund (held back by De Morville, and stretching out her arms).

Mercy, mercy, As you would hope for mercy.

Fitzurse. Strike, I say.

Grim. O God, O noble knights, O sacrilege!

Strike our Archbishop in his own cathedral!

The Pope, the King, will curse you—the whole world

Abhor you; ye will die the death of dogs!

Nay, nay, good Tracy.

[Lifts his arm.

Fitzurse. Answer not, but strike.

De Tracy. There is my answer then.

[Sword falls on Grim's arm, and glances from it, wounding

Becket.

Grim. Mine arm is severed.

I can no more—fight out the good fight—die

Conqueror.

[Staggers into the chapel of St. Benedict.

Becket (falling on his knees). At the right hand of Power—

Power and great glory—for thy Church, O Lord—

Into Thy hands, O Lord—into Thy hands!— [Sinks prone.

De Brito. This last to rid thee of a world of brawls! (Kills him.)

The traitor's dead, and will arise no more.

Fitzurse. Nay, have we still'd him?

What! the great Archbishop!

Does he breathe? No?

De Tracy. No, Reginald, he is dead. [Storm bursts.¹

De Morville. Will the earth gape and swallow us?

De Brito. The deed's done—Away!

[De Brito, De Tracy, Fitzurse, rush out, crying 'King's men!'

De Morville follows slowly.

Flashes of lightning thro' the

Cathedral. Rosamund seen

kneeling by the body of Becket.

¹ A tremendous thunderstorm actually broke over the Cathedral as the murderers were leaving it.

THE CUP: A TRAGEDY.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

GALATIANS.

SYNORIX, an *ex-Tetrarch*.
SINNATUS, a *Tetrarch*.
Attendant.
Boy.

Maid.
PHEBE.
CAMMA, wife of *Sinnatus*, afterwards
Priestess in the Temple of *Artemis*.

ROMANS.

ANTONIUS, a *Roman General*.
PUBLIUS.

Nobleman.
Messenger.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—DISTANT VIEW OF A CITY OF GALATIA.

As the curtain rises, Priestesses are heard singing in the Temple. Boy discovered on a pathway among Rocks, picking grapes. A party of Roman Soldiers, guarding a prisoner in chains, come down the pathway and exeunt.

Enter SYNORIX (looking round). Singing ceases.

Synorix. Pine, beech and plane,
oak, walnut, apricot,
Vine, cypress, poplar, myrtle, bower-
ing-in
The city where she dwells. She past
me here
Three years ago when I was flying
from
My Tetrarchy to Rome. I almost
touch'd her—
A maiden slowly moving on to music
Among her maidens to this Temple—
O Gods!
She is my fate—else wherefore has
my fate
Brought me again to her own city?—
married
Since—married Sinnatus, the Tetrarch
here—
But if he be conspirator, Rome will
chain,

Or slay him. I may trust to gain her
then
When I shall have my tetrarchy re-
stored
By Rome, our mistress, grateful that
I show'd her
The weakness and the dissonance of
our clans,
And how to crush them easily.
Wretched race!
And once I wish'd to scourge them to
the bones.
But in this narrow breathing-time of
life
Is vengeance for its own sake worth
the while,
If once our ends are gain'd? and now
this cup—
I never felt such passion for a woman.
[Brings out a cup and scroll from
under his cloak.
What have I written to her?

[Reading the scroll.
'To the admired Camma, wife of
Sinnatus, the Tetrarch, one who years
ago, himself an adorer of our great
goddess, Artemis, beheld you afar off
worshipping in her Temple, and loved
you for it, sends you this cup rescued
from the burning of one of her shrines
in a city thro' which he past with the
Roman army: it is the cup we use in
our marriages. Receive it from one
who cannot at present write himself
other than

'A GALATIAN SERVING BY FORCE
IN THE ROMAN LEGION.'

[Turns and looks up to Boy.

Boy, dost thou know the house of
Sinnatus?

Boy. These grapes are for the
house of Sinnatus—
Close to the Temple.

Synorix. Yonder?

Boy. Yes.

Synorix (aside). That I
With all my range of women should
yet shun
To meet her face to face at once!

My boy,
[*Boy comes down rocks to him.*]
Take thou this letter and this cup to
Camma,
The wife of Sinnatus.

Boy. Going or gone to-day
To hunt with Sinnatus.

Synorix. That matters not.
Take thou this cup and leave it at her
doors.

[*Gives the cup and scroll to the Boy.*]

Boy. I will, my lord,

[*Takes his basket of grapes and exit.*]

Enter ANTONIUS.

*Antonius (meeting the Boy as he goes
out).* Why, whither runs the
boy?

Is that the cup you rescued from the
fire?

Synorix. I send it to the wife of
Sinnatus,
One half besotted in religious rites.
You come here with your soldiers to
enforce

The long-witholden trile: you sus-
pect
This Sinnatus of playing patriot-
ism,

Which in your sense is treason. You
have yet

No proof against him: now this pious
cup

Is passport to their house, and open
arms

To him who gave it; and once there
I warrant

I worm thro' all their windings.

Antonius. If you prosper,
Our Senate, wearied of their tetrarch-
ies,

Their quarrels with themselves, their
spites at Rome,
Is like enough to cancel them, and
throne

One king above them all, who shall be
true

To the Roman: and from what I
heard in Rome,

This tributary crown may fall to you.

Synorix. The king, the crown!
their talk in Rome? is it so?

[*Antonius nods.*]
Well—I shall serve Galatia taking it,
And save her from herself, and be to

Rome
More faithful than a Roman.

[*Thurs and sees Camma coming.*]
Stand aside,

Stand aside; here she comes!

[*Watching Camma as she enters
with her Maid.*]

Camma (to Maid). Where is he,
girl?

Maid. You know the waterfall
That in the summer keeps the moun-
tain side,

But after rain o'erleaps a jutting rock
And shoots three hundred feet.

Camma. The stag is there?

Maid. Seen in the thicket at the
bottom there

But yester-even.

Camma. Good then, we will climb
The mountain opposite and watch the
chase—

[*They descend the rocks and exeunt.*]

Synorix (watching her). (*Aside.*)
The bust of Juno and the brows
and eyes

Of Venus; face and form unmatch-
able!

Antonius. Why do you look at her
so lingeringly?

Synorix. To see if years have
changed her.

Antonius (sarcastically). Love her,
do you?

Synorix. I envied Sinnatus when
he married her.

Antonius. She knows it? Ha!

Synorix. She—no, nor ev'n my
face.

Antonius. Nor Sinnatus either?

Synorix. No, nor Sinnatus.
Antonius. Hot-blooded! I have
 heard them say in Rome,
 That your own people cast you from
 their bounds,
 For some unprincely violence to a
 woman,

As Rome did Tarquin.

Synorix. Well, if this were so
 I here return like Tarquin—for a
 crown.

Antonius. And may be foil'd like
 Tarquin, if you follow
 Not the dry light of Rome's straight-
 going policy,

But the fool-fire of love or lust, which
 well

May make you lose yourself, may
 even drown you

In the good regard of Rome.

Synorix. Tut—fear me not;
 I ever had my victories among wo-
 men.

I am most true to Rome.

Antonius (aside). I hate the man!
 What filthy tools our Senate works
 with! Still

I must obey them. (*Aloud.*) Fare
 you well. [*Going.*]

Synorix. Farewell!

Antonius (stopping.) A moment!
 If you track this Sinnatus

In any treason, I give you here an
 order [*Produces a paper.*]

To seize upon him. Let me sign it.
 (*Signs it.*) There

'Antonius leader of the Roman
 Legion.'

[*Hands the paper to Synorix.*]

Goes up pathway and exit.

Synorix. Woman again!—but 'I
 am wiser now.

No rushing on the game—the net,—
 the net.

[*Shouts of 'Sinnatus! Sinnatus!'*]

Then horn.

[*Looking off stage.*] He comes, a
 rough, bluff, simple-looking
 fellow.

If we may judge the kernel by the
 husk,

Not one to keep a woman's fealty
 when

Assailed by Craft and Love. I'll join
 with him:

I may reap something from him—
 come upon *her*

Again, perhaps, to-day—*her*. Who
 are with him?

I see no face that knows me. Shall I
 risk it?

I am a Roman now, they dare not
 touch me.

I will.

*Enter Sinnatus, Huntsmen and
 hounds.*

Fair Sir, a happy day to
 you!

You reck but little of the Roman here,
 While you can take your pastime in
 the woods.

Sinnatus. Ay, ay, why not? What
 would you with me, man?

Synorix. I am a life-long lover of
 the chase,

And thro' a stranger fain would be
 allow'd

To join the hunt.

Sinnatus. Your name?

Synorix. Strato, my name.

Sinnatus. No Roman name?

Synorix. A Greek, my lord; you
 know

That we Galatians are both Greek
 and Gaul.

[*Shouts and horns in the distance.*]

Sinnatus. Hillo, the stag! (*To
 Synorix.*) What, you are all
 unfurnish'd?

Give him a bow and arrows—follow
 —follow.

[*Exit, followed by Huntsmen.*]

Synorix. Slowly but surely—till I
 see my way.

It is the one step in the dark beyond
 Our expectation, that amazes us.

[*Distant shouts and horns.*]

Hillo! Hillo!

[*Exit Synorix. Shouts and horns.*]

SCENE II.—A ROOM IN THE TETRARCH'S HOUSE.

*Frescoed figures on the walls. Even-
 ing. Moonlight outside. A couch*

with cushions on it. A small table with a flagon of wine, cups, plate of grapes, etc., also the cup of Scene I. A chair with drapery on it.

Camma enters, and opens curtains of window.

Camma. No Sinnatus yet—and there the rising moon.

[Takes up a cithern and sits on couch. Plays and sings.]

Moon on the field and the foam,
Moon on the waste and the wold,
Moon bring him home, bring him home
Safe from the dark and the cold,
Home, sweet moon, bring him home,
Home with the flock to the fold—
Safe from the wolf—

(Listening.) Is he coming? I thought I heard

A footstep. No not yet. They say that Rome

Sprang from a wolf. I fear my dear lord mixt

With some conspiracy against the wolf.

This mountain shepherd never dream'd of Rome.

(Sings.) Safe from the wolf to the fold—

And that great break of precipice that runs

Thro' all the wood, where twenty years ago

Huntsman, and hound, and deer were all neck-broken!

Nay, here he comes.

Enter SINNATUS followed by SYNORIX.

Sinnatus (angrily). I tell thee, my good fellow,

My arrow struck the stag.

Synorix. But was it so?

Nay, you were further off: besides the wind

Went with my arrow.

Sinnatus. I am sure I struck him.

Synorix. And I am just as sure, my lord, I struck him.

(Aside.) And I may strike your game when you are gone.

Camma. Come, come, we will not quarrel about the stag.

I have had a weary day in watching you.

Yours must have been a wearier. Sit and eat,

And take a hunter's vengeance on the meats.

Sinnatus. No, no—we have eaten—we are heated. Wine!

Camma. Who is our guest?

Sinnatus. Strato he calls himself.

[Camma offers wine to Synorix, while Sinnatus helps himself.]

Sinnatus. I pledge you, Strato.

Synorix. And I you, my lord. *[Drinks.]*

Sinnatus (seeing the cup sent to Camma). What's here?

Camma. A strange gift sent to me to-day.

A sacred cup saved from a blazing shrine

Of our great Goddess, in some city where

Antonius past. I had believed that Rome

Made war upon the peoples not the Gods.

Synorix. Most like the city rose against Antonius,

Whereon he fired it, and the sacred shrine

By chance was burnt along with it.

Sinnatus. Had you then no message with the cup?

Camma. Why, yes, see here.

[Gives him the scroll.]

Sinnatus (reads). 'To the admired Camma,—beheld you afar off—loved you—sends you this cup—the cup we use in our marriages—cannot at present write himself other than

'A GALATIAN SERVING BY FORCE IN THE ROMAN LEGION.'

Serving by force! Were there no boughs to hang on,

Rivers to drown in? Serve by force? No force

Could make me serve by force.

Synorix. How then, my lord?

The Roman is encamp't without your city—

The force of Rome a thousand-fold our own.

Must all Galatia hang or drown herself?

And you a Prince and Tetrarch in this province—

Sinnatus. Province!

Synorix. Well, well, they call it so in Rome.

Sinnatus (angrily). Province!

Synorix. A noble anger! but Antonius

To-morrow will demand your tribute—
—you,

Can you make war? Have you alliances?

Bithynia, Pontus, Paphlagonia?

We have had our leagues of old with Eastern kings.

There is my hand—if such a league there be.

What will you do?

Sinnatus. Not set myself abroad And run my mind out to a random guest

Who join'd me in the hunt. You saw my hounds

True to the scent; and we have two-legged dogs

Among us who can smell a true occasion,

And when to bark and how.

Synorix. My good Lord Sinnatus, I once was at the hunting of a lion.

Roused by the clamor of the chase he woke,

Came to the front of the wood—his monarch mane

Bristled about his quick ears—he stood there

Staring upon the hunter. A score of dogs

Gnaw'd at his ankles: at the last he felt

The trouble of his feet, put forth one paw,

Slew four, and knew it not, and so remain'd

Staring upon the hunter: and this Rome

Will crush you if you wrestle with her; then

Save for some slight report in her own Senate

Scarce know what she has done.

(*Aside.*) Would I could move him, Provoke him any way! (*Aloud.*) The

Lady Camma,

Wise I am sure as she is beautiful, Will close with me that to submit at

once

Is better than a wholly-hopeless war, Our gallant citizens murder'd all in

vain,

Son, husband, brother gash'd to death in vain,

And the small state more cruelly trampled on

Than had she never moved.

Camma. Sir, I had once A boy who died a babe; but were he

living

And grown to man and Sinnatus will'd it, I

Would set him in the front rank of the fight

With scarce a pang. (*Rises.*) Sir, if a state submit

At once, she may be blotted out at once

And swallow'd in the conqueror's chronicle.

Whereas in wars of freedom and defence

The glory and grief of battle won or lost

Solders a race together—yea—tho' they fail,

The names of those who fought and fell are like

A bank'd-up fire that flashes out again From century to century, and at last

May lead them on to victory—I hope so—

Like phantoms of the Gods.

Sinnatus. Well spoken, wife. *Synorix (bowing).* Madam, so well

I yield.

Sinnatus. I should not wonder If Synorix, who has dwelt three years

in Rome

And wrought his worst against his native land,



"QUEEN MAUD IN ALL HER SPLENDOR."—Page 168.



Returns with this Antonius.

Synorix. What is Synorix?

Sinnatus. Galatian, and not know?

This Synorix

Was Tetrarch here, and tyrant also—
did

Dishonor to our wives.

Synorix. Perhaps you judge
him

With feeble charity: being as you tell
me

Tetrarch, there might be willing wives
enough

To feel dishonor, honor.

Camma. Do not say so.

I know of no such wives in all
Galatia.

There may be courtesans for aught I
know

Whose life is one dishonor.

Enter ATTENDANT.

Attendant (aside). My lord, the
men!

Sinnatus (aside). Our anti-Roman
faction?

Attendant (aside). Ay, my lord.

Synorix (overhearing). (*Aside.*) I
have enough—their anti-
Roman faction.

Sinnatus (aloud). Some friends of
mine would speak to me with-
out.

You, Strato, make good cheer till I
return. [*Exit.*]

Synorix. I have much to say, no
time to say it in.

First, lady, know myself am that Gala-
tian

Who sent the cup.

Camma. I thank you from my
heart.

Synorix. Then that I serve with
Rome to serve Galatia.

That is my secret: keep it, or you
sell me

To torment and to death. [*Coming
closer.* For your ear only—

I love you—for your love to the great
Goddess.

The Romans sent me here a spy
upon you,

To draw you and your husband to
your doom.

I'd sooner die than do it.

[*Takes out paper given him by Anto-
nius.* This paper sign'd

Antonius—will you take it, read it?
there!

Camma. (*Reads.*) 'You are to
seize on Sinnatus,—if—'

Synorix. (*Snatches paper.*) No
more.

What follows is for no wife's eyes.

O Camma,

Rome has a glimpse of this con-
spiracy;

Rome never yet hath spar'd con-
spirator.

Horrible! flaying, scourging, crucify-
ing—

Camma. I am tender enough.

Why do you practise on me?

Synorix. Why should I practise
on you? How you wrong me!

I am sure of being every way ma-
lign'd.

And if you should betray me to your
husband—

Camma. Will you betray him by
this order?

Synorix. See,
I tear it all to pieces, never dream'd

Of acting on it. [*Tears the paper.*]

Camma. I owe you thanks for
ever.

Synorix. Hath Sinnatus never told
you of this plot?

Camma. What plot?

Synorix. A child's sand-
castle on the beach

For the next wave—all seen,—all cal-
culated,

All known by Rome. No chance for
Sinnatus.

Camma. Why said you not as
much to my brave Sinnatus?

Synorix. Brave—ay—too brave,
too over-confident,

Too like to ruin himself, and you,
and me!

Who else, with this black thunderbolt
of Rome

Above him, would have chased the
stag to-day

In the full face of all the Roman camp?

A miracle that they let him home again,
Not caught, maim'd, blinded him.

[Camma shudders.

(*Aside.*) I have made her tremble.
(*Aloud.*) I know they mean to torture him to death.

I dare not tell him how I came to know it;

I durst not trust him with—my serving Rome

To serve Galatia: you heard him on the letter.

Not say as much? I all but said as much.

I am sure I told him that his plot was folly.

I say it to you—you are wiser—Rome knows all,

But you know not the savagery of Rome.

Camma. O—have you power with Rome? use it for him!

Synorix. Alas! I have no such power with Rome. All that lies with Antonius.

[*As if struck by a sudden thought. Comes over to her.*

He will pass to-morrow
In the gray dawn before the Temple doors.

You have beauty,—O great beauty,—and Antonius,

So gracious toward women, never yet

Flung back a woman's prayer. Plead to him,

I am sure you will prevail.

Camma. Still—I should tell My husband.

Synorix. Will he let you plead for him

To a Roman?

Camma. I fear not.

Synorix. Then do not tell him.
Or tell him, if you will, when you return,

When you have charm'd our general into mercy,

And all is safe again. O dearest lady,

[*Murmurs of 'Synorix! Synorix!' heard outside.*

Think,—torture,—death,—and come.
Camma. I will, I will.

And I will not betray you.

Synorix (*aside*). (*As Sinnatus enters.*) Stand apart.

Enter SINNATUS and ATTENDANT.

Sinnatus. Thou art that Synorix!

One whom thou hast wrong'd
Without there, knew thee with Antonius.

They howl for thee, to rend thee head from limb.

Synorix. I am much malign'd. I thought to serve Galatia.

Sinnatus. Serve thyself first, villain! They shall not harm

My guest within my house. There! (*points to door*) there! this door

Opens upon the forest! Out, begone! Henceforth I am thy mortal enemy.

Synorix. However I thank thee (*draws his sword*); thou hast saved my life. [*Exit.*

Sinnatus. (*To Attendant.*) Return and tell them Synorix is not here. [*Exit Attendant.*

What did that villain Synorix say to you?

Camma. Is he—that—Synorix?

Sinnatus. Wherefore should you doubt it?

One of the men there knew him.

Camma. Only one,
And he perhaps mistaken in the face.

Sinnatus. Come, come, could he deny it? What did he say?

Camma. What should he say?

Sinnatus. What should he say, my wife!

He should say this, that being Tetrarch once

His own true people cast him from their doors

Like a base coin.

Camma. Not kindly to them?

Sinnatus. Kindly?
O the most kindly Prince in all the world!

Would clap his honest citizens on the back,
 Bandy their own rude jests with them,
 be curious
 About the welfare of their babes,
 their wives,
 O ay—their wives—their wives.
 What should he say?
 He should say nothing to my wife if I
 Were by to throttle him! He steep'd
 himself
 In all the lust of Rome. How should
 you guess
 What manner of beast it is?

Camma. Yet he seem'd kindly,
 And said he loathed the cruelties
 that Rome

Wrought on her vassals.

Sinnatus. Did he, *honest* man?

Camma. And you, that seldom
 brook the stranger here,
 Have let him hunt the stag with you
 to-day.

Sinnatus. I warrant you now, he
 said *he* struck the stag.

Camma. Why no, he never touch'd
 upon the stag.

Sinnatus. Why so I said, *my* ar-
 row. Well, to sleep.

[*Goes to close door.*]

Camma. Nay, close not yet the
 door upon a night

That looks half day.

Sinnatus. True; and my friends
 may spy him

And slay him as he runs.

Camma. He is gone already.
 Oh look,—yon grove upon the moun-
 tain,—white

In the sweet moon as with a lovelier
 snow!

But what a blotch of blackness under-
 neath!

Sinnatus. you remember—yea, you
 must,

That there three years ago—the vast
 vine-bowers

Ran to the summit of the trees, and
 dropt

Their streamers earthward, which a
 breeze of May

Took ever and anon, and open'd out

The purple zone of hill and heaven;
 there

You told your love; and like the
 swaying vines—

Yea,—with our eyes,—our hearts, our
 prophet hopes

Let in the happy distance, and that
 all

But cloudless heaven which we have
 found together

In our three married years! You
 kiss'd me there

For the first time. *Sinnatus*, kiss me
 now.

Sinnatus. First kiss. (*Kisses her.*)

There then! You talk almost
 as if it

Might be the last.

Camma. Will you not eat a little?

Sinnatus. No, no, we found a goat-
 herd's hut and shared

His fruits and milk. Liar! You will
 believe

Now that he never struck the stag—a
 brave one

Which you shall see to-morrow.

Camma. I rise to-morrow
 In the gray dawn, and take this holy

cup

To lodge it in the shrine of Artemis.

Sinnatus. Good!

Camma. If I be not back in
 half an hour,

Come after me.

Sinnatus. What! is there danger?

Camma. Nay,
 None that I know: 'tis but a step
 from here

To the Temple.

Sinnatus. All my brain is full of
 sleep.

Wake me before you go, I'll after
 you—

After me now! [*Closes door and exit.*]

Camma (*drawing curtains*). Your
 shadow. *Synorix*—

His face was not malignant, and he
 said

That men malign'd him. Shall I go?
 Shall I go?

Death, torture—

'He never yet flung back a woman's
 prayer!'

I go, but I will have my dagger with me. *[Exit.]*

SCENE III.—SAME AS SCENE I.
DAWN.

Music and Singing in the Temple.

*Enter SYNORIX watchfully, after him
PUBLIUS and SOLDIERS.*

Synorix. Publius!

Publius. Here!

Synorix. Do you remember what I told you?

Publius. When you cry 'Rome, Rome,' to seize

On whomsoever may be talking with you,

Or man, or woman, as traitors unto Rome.

Synorix. Right. Back again.

How many of you are there?

Publius. Some half a score.

[Exeunt Soldiers and Publius.]

Synorix. I have my guard about me.

I need not fear the crowd that hunted me

Across the woods, last night. I hardly gain'd

The camp at midnight. Will she come to me

Now that she knows me *Synorix?* Not if *Sinnatus*

Has told her all the truth about me. Well,

I cannot help the mould that I was cast in.

I fling all that upon my fate, my star. I know that I am genial, I would be

Happy, and make all others happy so They did not thwart me. Nay, she will not come.

Yet it she be a true and loving wife She may, perchance, to save this husband. Ay!

See, see, my white bird stepping toward the snare.

Why now I count it all but miracle, That this brave heart of mine should shake me so,

As helplessly as some unbearded boy's

When first he meets his maiden in a bower.

[Enter Camma (with cup).] The lark first takes the sunlight on his

wing, But you, twin sister of the morning

star, Forelead the sun.

Camma. Where is *Antonius?*

Synorix. Not here as yet. You are too early for him.

[She crosses towards Temple.]

Synorix. Nay, whither go you now?

Camma. To lodge this cup Within the holy shrine of *Artemis*,

And so return.

Synorix. To find *Antonius* here.

[She goes into the Temple, he looks after her.]

The loveliest life that ever drew the light

From heaven to brood upon her, and enrich

Earth with her shadow! I trust she will return.

These Romans dare not violate the Temple.

No, I must lure my game into the camp.

A woman I could live and die for. What!

Die for a woman, what new faith is this?

I am not mad, not sick, not old enough

To doat on one alone. Yes, mad for her,

Camma the stately, *Camma* the great-hearted,

So mad, I fear some strange and evil chance

Coming upon me, for by the Gods I seem

Strange to myself.

Re-enter CAMMA.

Camma. Where is *Antonius?*

Synorix. Where? As I said before, you are still too early.

Camma. Too early to be here alone
with thee;
For whether men malign thy name, or
no,
It bears an evil savor among women.
Where is Antonius? (*Loud.*)

Synorix. Madam, as you know
The camp is half a league without the
city;
If you will walk with me we needs
must meet

Antonius coming, or at least shall find
him
There in the camp.

Camma. No, not one step with
thee.

Where is Antonius? (*Louder.*)

Synorix (*advancing towards her*).
Then for your own sake,
Lady, I say it with all gentleness,
And for the sake of Sinnatus your
husband,
I must compel you.

Camma (*drawing her dagger*).
Stay!—too near is death.

Synorix (*disarming her*). Is it not
easy to disarm a woman?

Enter SINNATUS (*seizes him from
behind by the throat*).

Synorix (*throttled and scarce audi-
ble*). Rome! Rome!

Sinnatus. Adulterous dog!

Synorix (*stabbing him with Cam-
ma's dagger*). What! will you have
it? [*Camma utters a cry and
runs to Sinnatus.*]

Sinnatus (*falls backward*). I have
it in my heart—to the Temple
—fly—

For my sake—or they seize on thee.
Remember!

Away—farewell! [*Dies.*]

Camma (*runs up the steps into the
Temple, looking back*). Fare-
well!

Synorix (*seeing her escape*). The
women of the Temple drag her
in.

Publius! Publius! No,
Antonius would not suffer me to
break

Into the sanctuary. She hath es-
caped.

[*Looking down at Sinnatus.*
'Adulterous dog!' that red-faced
rage at me!

Then with one quick short stab—
eternal peace.

So end all passions. Then what use
in passions?

To warm the cold bounds of our dy-
ing life

And, lest we freeze in mortal apathy,
Employ us, heat us, quicken us, help
us, keep us

From seeing all too near that urn,
those ashes

Which all must be. Well used, they
serve us well.

I heard a saying in Egypt, that ambi-
bition

Is like the sea wave, which the more
you drink,

The more you thirst—yea—drink too
much, as men

Have done on rafts of wreck—it
drives you mad.

I will be no such wreck, am no such
gamester

As, having won the stake, would dare
the chance

Of double, or losing all. The Roman
Senate,

For I have always play'd into their
hands,

Means me the crown. And Camma
for my bride—

The people love her—if I win her
love,

They too will cleave to me, as one
with her.

There then I rest, Rome's tributary
king.

[*Looking down on Sinnatus.*
Why did I strike him?—having proof
enough

Against the man, I surely should have
left

That stroke to Rome. He saved my
life too. Did he?

It seem'd so. I have play'd the sud-
den fool.

And that sets her against me—for the
moment.

Camma—well, well, I never found the woman

I could not force or wheedle to my will.

She will be glad at last to wear my crown.

And I will make Galatia prosperous too,

And we will chirp among our vines, and smile

At bygone things till that (*pointing to Sinnatus*) eternal peace.

Rome! Rome!

[*Enter Publius and Soldiers.*
Twice I cried Rome. Why came ye not before?

Publius. Why come we now? Whom shall we seize upon?

Synorix (*pointing to the body of Sinnatus*). The body of that dead traitor Sinnatus.

Bear him away.

Music and Singing in Temple.

ACT II.

SCENE.—INTERIOR OF THE TEMPLE OF ARTEMIS.

Small gold gates on platform in front of the veil before the colossal statue of the Goddess, and in the centre of the Temple a tripod altar, on which is a lighted lamp. Lamps (lighted) suspended between each pillar. Tripods, vases, garlands of flowers, etc., about stage. Altar at back close to Goddess, with two cups. Solemn music. Priestesses decorating the Temple.

(*The Chorus of PRIESTESSES sing as they enter.*)

Artemis, Artemis, hear us, O Mother, hear us, and bless us!

Artemis, thou that art life to the wind, to the wave, to the glebe, to the fire!

Hear thy people who praise thee! O help us from all that oppress us!

Hear thy priestesses hymn thy glory! O yield them all their desire!

Priestess. Phœbe, that man from Synorix, who has been So oft to see the Priestess, waits once more

Before the Temple

Phæbe. We will let her know.

[*Signs to one of the Priestesses, who goes out.*

Since Camma fled from Synorix to our Temple,

And for her beauty, stateliness, and power,

Was chosen Priestess here, have you not mark'd

Her eyes were ever on the marble floor?

To-day they are fixt and bright—they look straight out.

Hath she made up her mind to marry him?

Priestess. To marry him who stabb'd her Sinnatus.

You will not easily make me credit that.

Phæbe. Ask her.

Enter CAMMA as Priestess (in front of the curtains).

Priestess. You will not marry Synorix?

Camma. My girl, I am the bride of Death, and only

Marry the dead.

Priestess. Not Synorix then?

Camma. My girl, At times this oracle of great Artemis Has no more power than other oracles To speak directly.

Phæbe. Will you speak to him, The messenger from Synorix who waits

Before the Temple?

Camma. Why not? Let him enter.

[*Comes forward on to step by tripod.*

Enter a MESSENGER.

Messenger (*kneels*). Greeting and health from Synorix! More than once

You have refused his hand. When
last I saw you,
You all but yielded. He entreats
you now
For your last answer. When he
struck at Sinnatus—

As I have many a time declared to
you—

He knew not at the moment who had
fasten'd
About his throat—he begs you to for-
get it

As scarce his act:—a random stroke :
all else

Was love for you: he prays you to
believe him.

Camma. I pray him to believe—
that I believe him.

Messenger. Why that is well.
You mean to marry him?

Camma. I mean to marry him—if
that be well.

Messenger. This very day the
Romans crown him king
For all his faithful services to Rome.
He wills you then this day to marry
him,

And so be throned together in the
sight

Of all the people, that the world may
know

You twain are reconciled, and no
more feuds

Disturb our peaceful vassalage to
Rome.

Camma. To-day? Too sudden. I
will brood upon it.

When do they crown him?

Messenger. Even now.

Camma. And where?

Messenger. Here by your temple.

Camma. Come once more to me
Before the crowning,—I will answer
you.

[*Exit Messenger.*
Phabe. Great Artemis! O Cam-
ma, can it be well,

Or good, or wise, that you should
clasp a hand

Red with the sacred blood of Sinna-
tus?

Camma. Good! mine own dagger
driven by Synorix found
All good in the true heart of Sinnatus,

And quench'd it there for ever.
Wise!

Life yields to death and wisdom bows
to Fate,

Is wisest, doing so. Did not this
man

Speak well? We cannot fight impe-
rial Rome,

But he and I are both Galatian-
born,

And tributary sovereigns, he and
I

Might teach this Rome—from knowl-
edge of our people—

Where to lay on her tribute—heavily
here

And lightly there. Might I not live
for that,

And drown all poor self-passion in
the sense

Of public good?

Phabe. I am sure you will not
marry him.

Camma. Are you so sure? I pray
you wait and see.

[*Shouts (from the distance).*

'Synorix! Synorix!'

Camma. Synorix, Synorix! So
they cried Sinnatus

Not so long since—they sicken me.
The One

Who shifts his policy suffers some-
thing, must

Accuse himself, excuse himself; the
Many

Will feel no shame to give themselves
the lie.

Phabe. Most like it was the Ro-
man soldier shouted.

Camma. Their shield-borne pa-
triot of the morning star

Hang'd at mid-day, their traitor of
the dawn

The clamor'd darling of their after-
noon!

And that same head they would have
play'd at ball with

And kick'd it featureless—they now
would crown.

[*Flourish of trumpets.*

*Enter a Galatian NOBLEMAN with
crown on a cushion.*

Noble (*kneels*). Greeting and health from Synorix. He sends you
This diadem of the first Galatian Queen,

That you may feed your fancy on the glory of it,
And join your life this day with his, and wear it
Beside him on his throne. He waits your answer.

Camma. Tell him there is one shadow among the shadows,
One ghost of all the ghosts—as yet so new,
So strange among them—such an alien there,
So much of husband in it still—that if
The shout of Synorix and Camma sitting
Upon one throne, should reach it, it would rise

He! . . . HE, with that red star between the ribs,
And my knife there—and blast the king and me,
And blanch the crowd with horror. I dare not, sir!
Throne him—and then the marriage—ay and tell him

That I accept the diadem of Galatia—
[*All are amazed.*
Yea, that ye saw me crown myself withal. [*Puts on the crown.*

I wait him his crown'd queen.
Noble. So will I tell him. [*Exit.*

Music. Two Priestesses go up the steps before the shrine, draw the curtains on either side (discovering the Goddess), then open the gates and remain on steps, one on either side, and kneel. A priestess goes off and returns with a veil of marriage, then assists Phæbe to veil Camma. At the same time Priestesses enter and stand on either side of the Temple. Camma and all the Priestesses kneel, raise their hands to the Goddess, and bow down.

[*Shouts, 'Synorix! Synorix!' All rise.*

Camma. Fling wide the doors and let the new-made children
Of our imperial mother see the show.
[*Sunlight pours through the doors.*
I have no heart to do it. (*To Phæbe*).
Look for me!

[*Crouches. Phæbe looks out. Shouts, 'Synorix! Synorix!'*
Phæbe. He climbs the throne.
Hot blood, ambition, pride
So bloat and redden his face—O would it were
His third last apoplexy! O bestial!
O how unlike our goodly Sinnatus.

Camma (*on the ground*). You wrong him surely; far as the face goes
A goodlier-looking man than Sinnatus.

Phæbe (*aside*). How dare she say it? I could hate her for it
But that she is distracted.

[*A flourish of trumpets.*
Camma. Is he crown'd?
Phæbe. Ay, there they crown him.
[*Crowd without shout, 'Synorix! Synorix!'*

[*A Priestess brings a box of spices to Camma, who throws them on the altar-flame.*

Camma. Rouse the dead altar-flame, fling in the spices,
Nard, Cinnamon, amomum, benzoin.
Let all the air reel into a mist of odor,

As in the midmost heart of Paradise.
Lay down the Lydian carpets for the king.

The king should pace on purple to his bride,
And music there to greet my lord the king.

[*Music.*
(*To Phæbe*). Dost thou remember when I wedded Sinnatus?

Ay, thou wast there—whether from maiden fears

Or reverential love for him I loved,
Or some strange second-sight, the marriage cup

Wherefrom we make libation to the Goddess

So shook within my hand, that the red wine

Ran down the marble and lookt like
blood, like blood.

Phæbe. I do remember your first-
marriage fears.

Camma. I have no fears at this
my second marriage.

See here—I stretch my hand out—
hold it there.

How steady it is!

Phæbe. Steady enough to stab him!
Camma. O hush! O peace! This
violence ill becomes

The silence of our Temple. Gentle-
ness,

Low words best chime with this so-
lemnity.

*Enter a procession of Priestesses and
Children bearing garlands and
golden goblets, and strewing flow-
ers.*

*Enter SYNORIX (as King, with gold
laurel-wreath crown and purple
robes), followed by ANTONIUS,
PUBLIUS, Noblemen, Guards, and
the Populace.*

Camma. Hail, King!

Synorix. Hail, Queen!

The wheel of fate has roll'd me to
the top.

I would that happiness were gold,
that I

Might cast my largess of it to the
crowd!

I would that every man made feast
to-day

Beneath the shadow of our pines and
planes!

For all my truer life begins to-day.
The past is like a travell'd land now
sunk

Below the horizon—like a barren
shore

That grew salt weeds, but now all
drown'd in love

And glittering at full tide—the boun-
teous bays

And havens filling with a blissful sea.
Nor speak I now too mightily, being
King

And happy! happiest, Lady, in my
power

To make you happy.

Camma. Yes, sir.

Synorix. Our Antonius,
Our faithful friend of Rome, tho'

Rome may set

A free foot where she will, yet of his
courtesy

Entreats he may be present at our
marriage.

Camma. Let him come—a legion
with him, if he will.

(*To Antonius.*) Welcome, my lord
Antonius, to our Temple.

(*To Synorix.*) You on this side the
altar. (*To Antonius.*) You on
that.

Call first upon the Goddess, Synorix.

[*All face the Goddess. Priestesses,
Children, Populace, and Guards
kneel—the others remain stand-
ing.*

Synorix. O Thou, that dost inspire
the germ with life,

The child, a thread within the house
of birth,

And give him limbs, then air, and
send him forth

The glory of his father—Thou whose
breath

Is balmy wind to robe our hills with
grass,

And kindle all our vales with myrtle-
blossom,

And roll the golden oceans of our
grain,

And sway the long grape-bunches of
our vines,

And fill all hearts with fatness and
the lust

Of plenty—make me happy in my
marriage!

Chorus (chanting). Artemis, Arte-
mis, hear him, Ionian Artemis!

Camma. O Thou that slayest the
babe within the womb

Or in the being born, or after slayest
him

As boy or man, great Goddess, whose
storm-voice

Unsockets the strong oak, and rears
his root

Beyond his head, and strows our fruits,
and lays

Our golden grain, and runs to sea
and makes it
Foam over all the fleetèd wealth of
kings

And peoples, hear.

Whose arrow is the plague—whose
quick flash splits

The mid-sea mast, and rifts the tower
to the rock,

And hurls the victor's column down
with him

That crowns it, hear.

Who causeth the safe earth to shud-
der and gape,

And gulf and flatten in her closing
chasm

Domed cities, hear.

Whose lava-torrents blast and blacken
a province

To a cinder, hear.

Whose winter-cataracts find a realm
and leave it

A waste of rock and ruin, hear. I call
thee

To make my marriage prosper to my
wish!

Chorus. Artemis, Artemis, hear
her, Ephesian Artemis!

Camma. Artemis, Artemis, hear
me, Galatian Artemis!

I call on our own Goddess in our own
Temple.

Chorus. Artemis, Artemis, hear
her, Galatian Artemis!

[*Thunder. All rise.*]

Synorix (aside). Thunder! Ay,
ay, the storm was drawing
hither

Across the hills when I was being
crown'd.

I wonder if I look as pale as she?

Camma. Art thou—still bent—on
marrying?

Synorix. Surely—yet
These are strange words to speak to
Artemis.

Camma. Words are not always
what they seem, my King.

I will be faithful to thee till thou die.

Synorix. I thank thee, Camma,—I
thank thee.

Camma (turning to Antonius). An-
tonius,

Much graced are we that our Queen
Rome in you

Deigns to look in upon our barba-
risms.

[*Turns, goes up steps to altar be-
fore the Goddess. Takes a cup
from off the altar. Holds it
towards Antonius. Antonius
goes up to the foot of the steps
opposite to Synorix.*]

You see this cup, my lord.

[*Gives it to him.*]

Antonius. Most curious!

The many-breasted mother Arte-
mis

Emboss'd upon it.

Camma. It is old, I know not
How many hundred years. Give it
me again.

It is the cup belonging our own Tem-
ple.

[*Puts it back on altar and takes up
the cup of Act I. Showing it
to Antonius.*]

Here is another sacred to the God-
dess,

The gift of Synorix; and the God-
dess, being

For this most grateful, wills, thro' me
her Priestess,

In honor of his gift and of our mar-
riage,

That Synorix should drink from his
own cup.

Synorix. I thank thee, Camma,—I
thank thee.

Camma. For—my lord—
It is our ancient custom in Galatia

That ere two souls be knit for life and
death,

They two should drink together from
one cup,

In symbol of their married unity,
Making libation to the Goddess.

Bring me

The costly wines we use in marriages.

[*They bring in a large jar of wine.*]

Camma pours wine into cup.

(*To Synorix.*) See here, I fill it. (*To
Antonius.*) Will you drink, my
lord?

Antonius. I? Why should I? I
am not to be married.

Camma. But that night bring a Roman blessing on us.

Antonius (refusing cup). Thy pardon, Priestess!

Camma. Thou art in the right. This blessing is for Synorix and for me.

See first I make libation to the Goddess, [*Makes libation.*]

And now I drink. [*Drinks and fills the cup again.*]

Thy turn, Galatian King. Drink and drink deep—our marriage will be fruitful.

Drink and drink deep, and thou wilt make me happy.

[*Synorix goes up to her. She hands him the cup. He drinks.*]

Synorix. There, *Camma*! I have almost drain'd the cup—

A few drops left.

Camma. Libation to the Goddess.

[*He throws the remaining drops on the altar and gives Camma the cup.*]

Camma (placing the cup on the altar). Why then the Goddess hears.

[*Comes down and forward to tripod. Antonius follows.*]

Antonius,
Where wast thou on that morning when I came

To plead to thee for Sinnatus's life,
Beside this temple half a year ago?

Antonius. I never heard of this request of thine.

Synorix (coming forward hastily to foot of tripod steps). I sought him and I could not find him.

Pray you,

Go on with the marriage rites.

Camma. . . . *Antonius*—

'*Camma*!' who spake?

Antonius. Not I.

Phæbe. Nor any here.

Camma. I am all but sure that some one spake. *Antonius,*

If you had found him plotting against Rome,

Would you have tortured Sinnatus to death?

Antonius. No thought was mine of torture or of death,

But had I found him plotting, I had counsell'd him

To rest from vain resistance. Rome is fated

To rule the world. Then, if he had not listen'd,

I might have sent him prisoner to Rome.

Synorix. Why do you palter with the ceremony?

Go on with the marriage rites.

Camma. They are finish'd.

Synorix. How!

Camma. Thou hast drunk deep enough to make me happy.

Dost thou not feel the love I bear to thee

Glow thro' thy veins?

Synorix. The love I bear to thee Glows thro' my veins since first I look'd on thee.

But wherefore slur the perfect ceremony?

The sovereign of Galatia weds his Queen.

Let all be done to the fullest in the sight

Of all the Gods.

Nay, rather than so clip The flowery robe of Hymen, we would add

Some golden fringe of gorgeousness beyond

Old use, to make the day memorial, when

Synorix, first King, *Camma,* first Queen o' the Realm,

Drew here the richest lot from Fate, to live

And die together.

This pain—what is it?—again? I had a touch of this last year—in—

Rome.

Yes, yes. (*To Antonius.*) Your arm—a moment—It will pass.

I reel beneath the weight of utter joy—

This all too happy day, crown—queen at once. [*Stagger.*]

O all ye Gods—Jupiter!—Jupiter!

[*Falls backward.*]

Camma. Dost thou cry out upon
the Gods of Rome?
Thou art Galatian-born. Our Artemis
Has vanquish'd their Diana.

Synorix (on the ground). I am
poison'd.

She—close the Temple door. Let
her not fly.

Camma (leaning on tripod). Have
I not drunk of the same cup
with thee?

Synorix. Ay, by the Gods of Rome
and all the world,
She too—she too—the bride! the
Queen! and I—

Monstrous! I that loved her.

Camma. I loved him.

Synorix. O murderous mad-woman!
I pray you lift me
And make me walk awhile. I have
heard these poisons
May be walk'd down.

[*Antonius and Publius raise him up.*

My feet are tons of lead,
They will break in the earth—I am
sinking—hold me—
Let me alone.

[*They leave him; he sinks down on
ground.*

Too late—thought myself
wise—

A woman's dupe. Antonius, tell the
Senate

I have been most true to Rome—
would have been true

To her—if it— [Falls as if dead.

*Camma (coming and leaning over
him).* So falls the throne of
an hour.

Synorix (half rising). Throne? is it
thou? the Fates are throned,
not we—

Not guilty of ourselves—thy doom
and mine—

Thou—coming my way too—Camma
—good-night. [Dies.

*Camma (upheld by weeping Priest-
esses).* Thy way? poor worm.
crawl down thine own black hole

To the lowest Hell. Antonius, is he
there?

I meant thee to have follow'd—better
thus.

Nay, if my people must be thralls of
Rome,

He is gentle, tho' a Roman.

[Sinks back into the arms of the Priest-
esses.

Antonius. Thou art one
With thine own people, and though a
Roman I

Forgive thee, Camma.

Camma (raising herself). 'CAMMA!
—why there again

I am most sure that some one call'd.

O women,

Ye will have Roman masters. I am
glad

I shall not see it. Did not some old
Greek

Say death was the chief good? He
had my fate for it,

Poison'd. (*Sinks back again.*) Have
I the crown on? I will go

To meet him, crown'd! crown'd victor
of my will—

On my last voyage—but the wind has
fail'd—

Growing dark too—but light enough
to row.

Row to the blessed Isles! the blessed
Isles!—

Sinnatus!

Why comes he not to meet me? It is
the crown

Offends him—and my hands are too
sleepy

To lift it off. [*Phœbe takes the crown
off.*

Who touch'd me then? I thank
you.

[Rises, with outspread arms.
There—league on league of ever-shin-
ing shore

Beneath an ever-rising sun—I see
him—

'Camma, Camma!' Sinnatus, Sinna-
tus! [Dies.

THE FALCON.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

THE COUNT FEDERIGO DEGLI ALBERIGHI.

FILIPPO, Count's foster-brother.

THE LADY GIOVANNA.

ELISABETTA, the Count's nurse.

SCENE.—AN ITALIAN COTTAGE.
CASTLE AND MOUNTAINS SEEN
THROUGH WINDOW.

ELISABETTA discovered seated on stool
in window darning. The Count
with Falcon on his hand comes down
through the door at back. A with-
ered wreath on the wall.

Elisabetta. So, my lord, the Lady
Giovanna, who hath been away so long,
came back last night with her son to
the castle.

Count. Hear that, my bird! Art
thou not jealous of her?
My princess of the cloud, my plumed
purveyor,
My far-eyed queen of the winds—thou
that canst soar
Beyond the morning lark, and how-
soe'er
Thy quarry wind and wheel, swoop
down upon him
Eagle-like, lightning-like—strike, make
his feathers
Glance in mid heaven.

[Crosses to chair.

I would thou hadst a mate!
Thy breed will die with thee, and
mine with me:
I am as lone and loveless as thyself.

[Sits in chair.

Giovanna here! Ay, ruffle thyself—
be jealous!
Thou should'st be jealous of her.
Tho' I bred thee
The full-train'd marvel of all falconry,
And love thee and thou me, yet if
Giovanna
Be here again—No, no! Buss me,
my bird!
The stately widow has no heart for
me.

Thou art the last friend left me upon
earth—

No, no again to that.

[Rises and turns.

My good old nurse,
I had forgotten thou wast sitting
there.

Elisabetta. Ay, and forgotten thy
foster-brother too.

Count. Bird-babble for my falcon!

Let it pass.

What art thou doing there?

Elisabetta. Darning your lordship.
We cannot flaunt it in new feathers
now:

Nay, if we will buy diamond neck-
laces

To please our lady, we must darn, my
lord.

This old thing here (*points to necklace
round her neck*), they are but
blue beads—my Piero,

God rest his honest soul, he bought
'em for me,

Ay, but he knew I meant to marry
him.

How couldst thou do it, my son?
How couldst thou do it?

Count. She saw it at a dance, upon
a neck
Less lovely than her own, and long'd
for it.

Elisabetta. She told thee as much?

Count. No, no—a friend of
hers.

Elisabetta. Shame on her that she
took it at thy hands,
She rich enough to have bought it for
herself!

Count. She would have robb'd me
then of a great pleasure.

Elisabetta. But hath she yet re-
turn'd thy love?

Count. Not yet!

Elisabetta. She should return thy necklace then.

Count. Ay, if
She knew the giver; but I bound the seller

To silence, and I left it privily
At Florence, in her palace.

Elisabetta. And sold thine own
To buy it for her. She not know?

She knows
There's none such other—

Count. Madman anywhere.
Speak freely, tho' to call a madman mad
Will hardly help to make him sane again.

Enter FILIPPO.

Filippo. Ah, the women, the women! Ah, Monna Giovanna, you here again! you that have the face of an angel and the heart of a—that's too positive! You that have a score of lovers and have not a heart for any of them—that's positive-negative: you that have *not* the head of a toad, and *not* a heart like the jewel in it—that's too negative; you that have a cheek like a peach and a heart like the stone in it—that's positive again—that's better!

Elisabetta. Sh—sh—Filippo!

Filippo (turns half round). Here has our master been a-glorifying and a-velveting and a-silking himself, and a-peacocking and a-spreading to catch her eye for a dozen year, till he hasn't an eye left in his own tail to flourish among the pea-hens, and all along o' you, Monna Giovanna, all along o' you!

Elisabetta. Sh—sh—Filippo! Can't you hear that you are saying behind his back what you see you are saying afore his face?

Count. Let him—he never spares me to my face!

Filippo. No, my lord, I never spare your lordship to your lordship's face, nor behind your lordship's back, nor to right, nor to left, nor to round about and back to your lordship's

face again, for I'm honest, your lordship.

Count. Come, come, Filippo, what is there in the larder?

[*Elisabetta crosses to fireplace and puts on wood.*]

Filippo. Shelves and hooks, shelves and hooks, and when I see the shelves I am like to hang myself on the hooks.

Count. No bread?

Filippo. Half a breakfast for a rat!

Count. Milk?

Filippo. Three laps for a cat!

Count. Cheese?

Filippo. A supper for twelve mites.

Count. Eggs?

Filippo. One, but addled.

Count. No bird?

Filippo. Half a tit and a hern's bill.

Count. Let be thy jokes and thy jerks, man! Anything or nothing?

Filippo. Well, my lord, if all-but-nothing be anything, and one plate of dried prunes be all-but-nothing, then there is anything in your lordship's larder at your lordship's service, if your lordship care to call for it.

Count. Good mother, happy was the prodigal son,

For he return'd to the rich father; I
But add my poverty to thine. And all
Thro' following of my fancy. Pray
thee make

Thy slender meal out of those scraps
and shreds

Filippo spoke of. As for him and me,
There sprouts a salad in the garden
still.

(*To the Falcon.*) Why didst thou miss
thy quarry yester-even?

To-day, my beauty, thou must dash us
down

Our dinner from the skies. Away,
Filippo!

[*Exit, followed by Filippo.*]

Elisabetta. I knew it would come to this. She has beggared him. I always knew it would come to this! (*Goes up to table as if to resume darning, and looks out of window.*) Why, as I live, there is Monna Giovanna coming down the hill from the castle. Stops and stares at our cottage. Ay,

ay! stare at it: it's all you have left us. Shame on you! *She* beautiful: sleek as a miller's mouse! Meal enough, meat enough, well fed; but beautiful—bah! Nay, see, why she turns down the path through our little vineyard, and I sneezed three times this morning. Coming to visit my lord, for the first time in her life too! Why, bless the saints! I'll be bound to confess her love to him at last. I forgive her, I forgive her! I knew it would come to this—I always knew it must come to this! *(Going up to door during latter part of speech and opens it.)* Come in, Madonna, come in. *(Retires to front of table and curtsies as the Lady Giovanna enters, then moves chair towards the hearth.)* Nay, let me place this chair for your ladyship.

[Lady Giovanna moves slowly down stage, then crosses to chair, looking about her, bows as she sees the Madonna over fireplace, then sits in chair.]

Lady Giovanna. Can I speak with the Count?

Elisabetta. Ay, my lady, but won't you speak with the old woman first, and tell her all about it and make her happy? for I've been on my knees every day for these half-dozen years in hope that the saints would send us this blessed morning; and he always took you so kindly, he always took the world so kindly. When he was a little one, and I put the bitters on my breast to wean him, he made a wry mouth at it, but he took it so kindly, and your ladyship has given him bitters enough in this world, and he never made a wry mouth at you, he always took you so kindly—which is more than I did, my lady, more than I did—and he so handsome—and bless your sweet face, you look as beautiful this morning as the very Madonna her own self—and better late than never—but come when they will—then or now—it's all for the best, come when they will—they are made by the blessed saints—these marriages.

[Raises her hands.]

Lady Giovanna. Marriages? I shall never marry again!

Elisabetta (rises and turns). Shame on her then!

Lady Giovanna. Where is the Count?

Elisabetta. Just gone To fly his falcon.

Lady Giovanna. Call him back and say

I come to breakfast with him.

Elisabetta. Holy mother! To breakfast! Oh sweet saints! one plate of prunes!

Well, Madam, I will give your message to him. *[Exit.]*

Lady Giovanna. His falcon, and I come to ask for his falcon,

The pleasure of his eyes—boast of his hand—

Pride of his heart—the solace of his hours—

His one companion here—nay, I have heard

That, thro' his late magnificence of living

And this last costly gift to mine own self, *[Shows diamond necklace.]*

He hath become so beggar'd, that his falcon

Ev'n wins his dinner for him in the field.

That must be talk, not truth, but truth or talk,

How can I ask for his falcon?

[Rises and moves as she speaks.]

O my sick boy!

My daily fading Florio, it is thou Hath set me this hard task, for when

I say

What can I do—what can I get for thee?

He answers, 'Get the Count to give me his falcon,

And that will make me well.' Yet if I ask,

He loves me, and he knows I know he loves me!

Will he not pray me to return his love—

To marry him?—*(pause)*—I can never marry him.

His grandsire struck my grandsire in
a brawl
At Florence, and my grandsire stabb'd
him there.
The feud between our houses is the
bar
I cannot cross; I dare not brave my
brother,
Break with my kin. My brother
hates him, scorns
The noblest-natured man alive, and I—
Who have that reverence for him that
I scarce
Dare beg him to receive his diamonds
back—
How can I, dare I, ask him for his
falcon?

[Puts diamonds in her casket.]

Re-enter COUNT and FILIPPO. COUNT
turns to FILIPPO.

Count. Do what I said; I cannot
do it myself.

Filippo. Why then, my lord, we
are pauper'd out and out.

Count. Do what I said!

[Advances and bows low.]

Welcome to this poor cottage, my
dear lady.

Lady Giovanna. And welcome
turns a cottage to a palace.

Count. 'Tis long since we have
met!

Lady Giovanna. To make amends
I come this day to break my fast with
you.

Count. I am much honor'd—yes—

[Turns to Filippo.]

Do what I told thee. Must I do it
myself?

Filippo. I will, I will. (Sighs.)
Poor fellow!

[Exit.]

Count. Lady, you bring your light
into my cottage
Who never deign'd to shine into my
palace.

My palace wanting you was but a
cottage;

My cottage, while you grace it, is a
palace.

Lady Giovanna. In cottage or in
palace, being still

Beyond your fortunes, you are still the
king

Of courtesy and liberality.

Count. I trust I still maintain my
courtesy;

My liberality perforce is dead
Thro' lack of means of giving.

Lady Giovanna. Yet I come
To ask a gift.

[Moves toward him a little.]

Count. It will be hard, I fear,
To find one shock upon the field when
all

The harvest has been carried.

Lady Giovanna. But my boy—
(Aside.) No, no! not yet—I cannot!

Count. Ay, how is he,
That bright inheritor of your eyes—
your boy?

Lady Giovanna. Alas, my Lord
Federigo, he hath fallen

Into a sickness, and it troubles me.

Count. Sick! is it so? why, when
he came last year

To see me hawking, he was well
enough:

And then I taught him all our hawk-
ing-phrases.

Lady Giovanna. Oh yes, and once
you let him fly your falcon.

Count. How charm'd he was!
what wonder?—A gallant boy,

A noble bird, each perfect of the
breed.

Lady Giovanna (sinks in chair).
What do you rate her at?

Count. My bird? a hundred
Gold pieces once were offer'd by the

Duke.

I had no heart to part with her for
money.

Lady Giovanna. No, not for money.
[Count turns away and sighs.]

Wherefore do you sigh?

Count. I have lost a friend of late.

Lady Giovanna. I could sigh with
you

For fear of losing more than friend, a
son;

And if he leave me—all the rest of
life—

That wither'd wreath were of more
worth to me.

[Looking at wreath on wall.
Count. That wither'd wreath is of
more worth to me
Than all the blossom, all the leaf of
this
New-wakening year.

[Goes and takes down wreath.
Lady Giovanna. And yet I never
saw
The land so rich in blossom as this
year.

Count (holding wreath toward her).
Was not the year when this
was gather'd richer?

Lady Giovanna. How long ago
was that?

Count. Alas, ten summers!
A lady that was beautiful as day
Sat by me at a rustic festival
With other beauties on a mountain
meadow,
And she was the most beautiful of all;
Then but fifteen, and still as beautiful.

The mountain flowers grew thickly
round about.

I made a wreath with some of these;
I ask'd

A ribbon from her hair to bind it
with;

I whisper'd, Let me crown you Queen
of Beauty,

And softly placed the chaplet on her
head.

A color, which has color'd all my
life,

Flush'd in her face; then I was call'd
away;

And presently all rose, and so departed.

Ah! she had thrown my chaplet on
the grass,

And there I found it.

[Lays his hands fall, holding
wreath despondingly.

Lady Giovanna (after pause). How
long since do you say?

Count. That was the very year before
you married.

Lady Giovanna. When I was married
you were at the wars.

Count. Had she not thrown my
chaplet on the grass,

It may be I had never seen the
wars.

[Replaces wreath whence he had
taken it.

Lady Giovanna. Ah, but, my lord,
there ran a rumor then
That you were kill'd in battle. I can
tell you

True tears that year were shed for you
in Florence.

Count. It might have been as well
for me. Unhappily
I was but wounded by the enemy
there

And then imprison'd.

Lady Giovanna. Happily, however,

I see you quite recover'd of your
wound.

Count. No, no, not quite, Madonna,
not yet, not yet.

Re-enter FILIPPO.

Filippo. My lord, a word with you.

Count. Pray, pardon me!

[Lady Giovanna crosses, and
passes behind chair and takes
down wreath; then goes to chair
by table.

Count (to Filippo). What is it, Filippo?

Filippo. Spoons, your lordship.

Count. Spoons!

Filippo. Yes, my lord, for wasn't
my lady born with a golden spoon in
her ladyship's mouth, and we haven't
never so much as a silver one for the
golden lips of her ladyship.

Count. Have we not half a score
of silver spoons?

Filippo. Half o' one, my lord!

Count. How half of one?

Filippo. I trod upon him even now,
my lord, in my hurry, and broke him.

Count. And the other nine?

Filippo. Sold! but shall I not
mount with your lordship's leave to
her ladyship's castle, in your lordship's
and her ladyship's name, and confer
with her ladyship's seneschal,
and so descend again with some of
her ladyship's own appurtenances?

Count. Why—no, man. Only see your cloth be clean. [*Exit Filippo.*]

Lady Giovanna. Ay, ay, this faded ribbon was the mode
In Florence ten years back. What's here? a scroll
Pinned to the wreath.

My lord, you have said so much
Of this poor wreath that I was bold
enough

To take it down, if but to guess what
flowers

Had made it; and I find a written
scroll

That seems to run in rhymings. Might
I read?

Count. Ay, if you will.

Lady Giovanna. It should be if
you can.

(*Reads.*) 'Dead mountain.' Nay, for
who could trace a hand
So wild and staggering?

Count. This was penn'd, Madonna,
Close to the grating on a winter
morn

In the perpetual twilight of a prison,
When he that made it, having his
right hand

Lamed in the battle, wrote it with his
left.

Lady Giovanna. O heavens! the
very letters seem to shake

With cold, with pain perhaps, poor
prisoner! Well,

Tell me the words—or better—for I
see

There goes a musical score along
with them,

Repeat them to their music.

Count. You can touch
No chord in me that would not an-
swer you

In music.

Lady Giovanna. That is musically
said.

[*Count takes guitar. Lady Gio-
vanna sits listening with wreath
in her hand, and quietly re-
moves scroll and places it on
table at the end of the song.*]

Count (sings, playing guitar).

'Dead mountain flowers, dead
mountain-meadow flowers,

Dearer than when you made your
mountain gay,
Sweeter than any violet of to-day,
Richer than all the wide world-wealth
of May,
To me, tho' all your bloom has died
away,
You bloom again, dead mountain-
meadow flowers.'

Enter ELISABETTA with cloth.

Elisabetta. A word with you, my
lord!

Count (singing). 'O mountain
flowers!'

Elisabetta. A word, my lord!
(*Louder.*)

Count (sings). 'Dead flowers!'

Elisabetta. A word, my lord!
(*Louder.*)

Count. I pray you pardon me
again!

[*Lady Giovanna looking at wreath.*
Count (to Elisabetta). What is it?

Elisabetta. My lord, we have but
one piece of earthenware to serve the
salad in to my lady, and that cracked!

Count. Why then, that flower'd
bowl my ancestor

Fetch'd from the farthest east—we
never use it

For fear of breakage—but this day
has brought

A great occasion. You can take it,
nurse!

Elisabetta. I did take it, my lord,
but what with my lady's coming that
had so hurried me, and what with the
fear of breaking it, I did break it, my
lord: it is broken!

Count. My one thing left of value
in the world!

No matter! see your cloth be white as
snow!

Elisabetta (pointing thro' window).
White? I warrant thee, my son, as
the snow yonder on the very tip-top o'
the mountain.

Count. And yet to speak white
truth, my good old mother,
I have seen it like the snow on the
moraine.

Elisabetta. How can your lordship say so? There my lord!

[Lays cloth.

O my dear son, be not unkind to me. And one word more. [Goes—returns.

Count (touching guitar). Good! let it be but one.

Elisabetta. Hath she return'd thy love?

Count. Not yet!

Elisabetta. And will she?

Count (looking at Lady Giovanna). I scarce believe it!

Elisabetta. Shame upon her then!

[Exit.

Count (sings). 'Dead mountain flowers'—

Ah well, my nurse has broken The thread of my dead flowers, as she has broken

My china bowl. My memory is as dead.

[Goes and replaces guitar.

Strange that the words at home with me so long

Should fly like bosom friends when needed most.

So by your leave if you would hear the rest,

The writing.

Lady Giovanna (holding wreath toward him). There! my lord,

you are a poet,

And can you not imagine that the wreath,

Set, as you say, so lightly on her head,

Fell with her motion as she rose, and she,

A girl, a child, then but fifteen, however

Flutter'd or flatter'd by your notice of her,

Was yet too bashful to return for it?

Count. Was it so indeed? was it so? was it so?

[Leans forward to take wreath, and touches Lady Giovanna's hand,

which she withdraws hastily; he places wreath on corner of chair.

Lady Giovanna (with dignity). I did not say, my lord, that it was so;

I said you might imagine it was so.

Enter FILIPPO with bowl of salad, which he places on table.

Filippo. Here's a fine salad for my lady, for tho' we have been a soldier, and ridden by his lordship's side, and seen the red of the battle-field, yet are we now drill-sergeant to his lordship's lettuces, and profess to be great in greevings and in garden-stuff.

Lady Giovanna. I thank thee, good Filippo. [Exit Filippo.

Enter ELISABETTA with bird on a dish which she places on table.

Elisabetta (close to table). Here's a fine fowl for my lady; I had scant time to do him in. I hope he be not underdone, for we be undone in the doing of him.

Lady Giovanna. I thank you, my good nurse.

Filippo (re-entering with plate of prunes). And here are fine fruits for my lady—prunes, my lady, from the tree that my lord himself planted here in the blossom of his boyhood—and so I, Filippo, being, with your ladyship's pardon, and as your ladyship knows, his lordship's own foster-brother, would commend them to your ladyship's most peculiar appreciation.

[Puts plate on table.

Elisabetta. Filippo!

Lady Giovanna (Count leads her to table). Will you not eat with me, my lord?

Count. I cannot, Not a morsel, not one morsel. I have broken

My fast already. I will pledge you

Wine!

Filippo, wine!

[Sits near table; Filippo brings flask, fills the Count's goblet, then Lady Giovanna's; Elisabetta stands at the back of Lady Giovanna's chair.

Count. It is but thin and cold, Not like the vintage blowing round your castle.

We lie too deep down in the shadow here

Your ladyship lives higher in the sun.

[*They pledge each other and drink.*
Lady Giovanna. If I might send you down a flask or two Of that same vintage? There is iron in it.

It has been much commended as a medicine.

I give it my sick son, and if you be Not quite recover'd of your wound, the wine

Might help you. None has ever told me yet

The story of your battle and your wound.

Filippo (coming forward). I can tell you, my lady, I can tell you.

Elisabetta. Filippo! will you take the word out of your master's own mouth?

Filippo. Was it there to take? Put it there, my lord.

Count. Giovanna, my dear lady, in this same battle

We had been beaten—they were ten to one.

The trumpets of the fight had echo'd down,

I and Filippo here had done our best,

And, having passed unwounded from the field,

Were seated sadly at a fountain side, Our horses grazing by us, when a troop,

Laden with booty and with a flag of ours

Ta'en in the fight—

Filippo. Ay, but we fought for it back,

And kill'd—

Elisabetta. Filippo!

Count. A troop of horse—

Filippo. Five hundred!

Count. Say fifty!

Filippo. And we kill'd 'em by the score!

Elisabetta. Filippo!

Filippo. Well, well, well!

I bite my tongue.

Count. We may have left their fifty less by five,

However, staying not to count how many,

But anger'd at their flaunting of our flag,

We mounted, and we dash'd into the heart of 'em.

I wore the lady's chaplet round my neck;

It served me for a blessed rosary.

I am sure that more than one brave fellow owed

His death to the charm in it.

Elisabetta. Hear that, my lady!

Count. I cannot tell how long we strove before

Our horses fell beneath us; down we went

Crush'd, hack'd at, trampled under-foot. The night,

As some cold-manner'd friend may strangely do us

The truest service, had a touch of frost

That help'd to check the flowing of the blood.

My last sight ere I swoon'd was one sweet face

Crown'd with the wreath. *That* seem'd to come and go.

They left us there for dead!

Elisabetta. Hear that, my lady!

Filippo. Ay, and I left two fingers there for dead. See, my lady!

[*Showing his hand.*]

Lady Giovanna. I see, Filippo!

Filippo. And I have small hope of the gentleman gout in my great toe.

Lady Giovanna. And why, Filippo?

[*Smiling absently.*
Filippo. I left him there for dead too!

Elisabetta. She smiles at him—how hard the woman is!

My lady, if your ladyship were not Too proud to look upon the garland,

you

Would find it stain'd—

Count (rising). Silence, Elisabetta!

Elisabetta. Stain'd with the blood of the best heart that ever

Beat for one woman.

[*Points to wreath on chair.*]

Lady Giovanna (rising slowly). I can eat no more!

Count. You have but trifled with our homely salad, But dallied with a single lettuce-leaf; Not eaten anything.

Lady Giovanna. Nay, nay, I cannot.

You know, my lord, I told you I was troubled.

My one child Florio lying still so sick,

I bound myself, and by a solemn vow, That I would touch no flesh till he were well

Here, or else well in Heaven, where all is well.

[*Elisabetta clears table of bird and salad: Filippo snatches up the plate of prunes and holds them to Lady Giovanna.*

Filippo. But the prunes, my lady, from the tree that his lordship—

Lady Giovanna. Not now, Filippo.

My lord Federigo, Can I not speak with you once more alone?

Count. You hear, Filippo? My good fellow, go!

Filippo. But the prunes that your lordship—

Elisabetta. Filippo!

Count. Ay, prune our company of thine own and go!

Elisabetta. Filippo!

Filippo (turning). Well, well! the women! [Exit.]

Count. And thou too leave us, my dear nurse, alone.

Elisabetta (folding up cloth and going). And me too! Ay, the dear nurse will leave you alone; but, for all that, she that has eaten the yolk is scarce like to swallow the shell.

[*Turns and curtsies stiffly to Lady Giovanna, then exit.* Lady Giovanna takes out diamond necklace from casket.

Lady Giovanna. I have anger'd your good nurse; these old-world servants

Are all but flesh and blood with those they serve.

My lord, I have a present to return you, And afterwards a boon to crave of you.

Count. No, my most honor'd and long-worshipt lady, Poor Federigo degli Alberighi Takes nothing in return from you except

Return of his affection—can deny Nothing to you that you require of him.

Lady Giovanna. Then I require you to take back your diamonds— [Offering necklace.

I doubt not they are yours. No other heart

Of such magnificence in courtesy Beats—out of heaven. They seem'd too rich a prize

To trust with any messenger. I came In person to return them.

[*Count draws back.* If the phrase

'Return' displease you, we will say—exchange them

For your—for your—

Count (takes a step toward her and then back). For mine—and what of mine?

Lady Giovanna. Well, shall we say this wreath and your sweet rhymes?

Count. But have you ever worn my diamonds?

Lady Giovanna. No! For that would seem accepting of your love.

I cannot brave my brother—but be sure

That I shall never marry again, my lord!

Count. Sure?

Lady Giovanna. Yes!

Count. Is this your brother's order?

Lady Giovanna. No! For he would marry me to the richest man

In Florence; but I think you know the saying—

'Better a man without riches, than riches without a man.'

Count. A noble saying—and acted
on would yield

A nobler breed of men and women.

Lady,
I find you a shrewd bargainer. The
wreath

That once you wore outvalues twenty-
fold

The diamonds that you never deign'd
to wear.

But lay them there for a moment!

[*Points to table.* *Lady Giovanna*
places necklace on table.

And be you
Gracious enough to let me know the
boon

By granting which, if aught be mine
to grant,

I should be made more happy than I
hoped

Ever to be again.

Lady Giovanna. Then keep your
wreath,

But you will find me a shrewd bar-
gainer still.

I cannot keep your diamonds, for the
gift

I ask for, to my mind and at this
present

Outvalues all the jewels upon earth.

Count. It should be love that thus
outvalues all.

You speak like love, and yet you love
me not.

I have nothing in this world but love
for you.

Lady Giovanna. Love? it is love,
love for my dying boy.

Moves me to ask it of you.

Count. What? my time?
Is it my time? Well, I can give my
time

To him that is a part of you, your son.
Shall I return to the castle with you?

Shall I

Sit by him, read to him, tell him my
tales,

Sing him my songs? You know that
I can touch

The glitter to some purpose

Lady Giovanna. No, not that!

I thank you heartily for that—and
you,

I doubt not from your nobleness of
nature,
Will pardon me for asking what I
ask.

Count. Giovanna, dear Giovanna,
I that once
The wildest of the random youth of
Florence

Before I saw you—all my nobleness
Of nature, as you deign to call it,
draws

From you, and from my constancy to
you.

No more, but speak.

Lady Giovanna. I will. You know
sick people,

More specially sick children, have
strange fancies,

Strange longings; and to thwart them
in their mood

May work them grievous harm at
times, may even

Hasten their end. I would you had a
son!

It might be easier then for you to
make

Allowance for a mother—her—who
comes

To rob you of your one delight on
earth.

How often has my sick boy yearn'd
for this!

I have put him off as often; but to-
day

I dared not—so much weaker, so
much worse

For last day's journey. I was weep-
ing for him;

He gave me his hand: 'I should be
well again

If the good Count would give me—'
Count. Give me.

Lady Giovanna. His falcon.

Count (starts back). My falcon!

Lady Giovanna. Yes, your falcon,
Federigo!

Count. Alas, I cannot!

Lady Giovanna. Cannot? Even
so!

I fear'd as much. O this unhappy
world!

How shall I break it to him? how
shall I tell him?

The boy may die: more blessed were
the rags

Of some pale beggar-woman seeking
alms

For her sick son, if he were like to
live,

Than all my childless wealth, if mine
must die.

I was to blame—the love you said you
bore me—

My lord, we thank you for your enter-
tainment. [*With a stately
curtsey.*]

And so return—Heaven help him!—
to our son. [*Turns.*]

Count (rushes forward). Stay,
stay, I am most unlucky, most
unhappy.

You never had look'd in on me be-
fore,

And when you came and dipt your
sovereign head

Thro' these low doors, you ask'd to
eat with me.

I had but emptiness to set before
you,

No not a draught of milk, no not an
egg.

Nothing but my brave bird, my noble
falcon,

My comrade of the house, and of the
field.

She had to die for it—she died for
you.

Perhaps I thought with those of old,
the nobler

The victim was, the more acceptable
Might be the sacrifice. I fear you
scarce

Will thank me for your entertainment
now.

Lady Giovanna (returning). I bear
with him no longer.

Count. No, Madonna!
And he will have to bear with it as
he may.

Lady Giovanna. I break with him
forever!

Count. Yes, Giovanna,

But he will keep his love to you for-
ever!

Lady Giovanna. You? you? not
you! My brother! my hard
brother!

O Federigo, Federigo, I love you!
Spite of ten thousand brothers, Fed-
erigo.

[Falls at his feet.
Count (impetuously). Why then
the dying of my noble bird

Hath served me better than her living
—then

[Takes diamonds from table.
These diamonds are both yours and
mine—have won

Their value again—beyond all mar-
kets—there

I lay them for the first time round
your neck.

[Lays necklace round her neck.
And then this chaplet—No more
feuds, but peace,

Peace and conciliation! I will
make

Your brother love me. See, I tear
away

The leaves were darken'd by the bat-
tle—

[Pulls leaves off and throws them down.
—crown you

Again with the same crown my Queen
of Beauty.

[Places wreath on her head.
Rise—I could almost think that the
dead garland

Will break once more into the living
blossom.

Nay, nay, I pray you rise.
[Raises her with both hands.

We two together
Will help to heal your son—your son

and mine—
We shall do it—we shall do it.

[Embraces her.
The purpose of my being is accom-
plish'd,

And I am happy!
Lady Giovanna. And I too, Fed-
erigo.

THE PROMISE OF MAY.

A surface man of theories, true to none.'

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

FARMER DOBSON.

MR. PHILIP EOGAR (*afterwards* MR. HAROLD).

FARMER STEER (*DORA and EVA's Father*).

MR. WILSON (*a Schoolmaster*).

HIGGINS

JAMES

DAN SMITH

JACKSON

ALLEN

DORA STEER.

EVA STEER.

SALLY ALLEN

MILLY

} *Farm Laborers.*

} *Farm Servants.*

Farm Servants, Laborers, etc.

ACT I.

SCENE.—BEFORE FARMHOUSE.

Farming Men and Women. Farming Men carrying forms, etc., Women carrying baskets of knives and forks, etc.

1st Farming Man. Be thou agawin' to the long barn?

2nd Farming Man. Ay, to be sewer! Be thou?

1st Farming Man. Why, o' coorse, fur it be the owd man's birthdaäy. He be heichty this very daäy, and 'e telled all on us to be i' the long barn by one o'clock, fur he'll gie us a big dinner, and haäfe th' parish 'll be theer, an' Miss Dora, an' Miss Eva, 'an all!

2nd Farming Man. Miss Dora be coomed back, then?

1st Farming Man. Ay, haäfe an hour ago. She be in theer now. (*Pointing to house.*) Owd Steer wur afeärd she wouldn't be back i' time to keep his birthdaäy, and he wur in a tew about it all the murnin'; and he sent me wi' the gig to Littlechester to fetch 'er; and 'er an' the owd man they 'll a kissin' o' one another like

two sweet'arts i' the poorch as soon as he clapt eyes of 'er.

2nd Farming Man. Foäłks says he likes Miss Eva the best.

1st Farming Man. Naäy, I knows nowt o' what foäłks says, an' I caäres nowt neither. Foäłks doesn't hallus know thessens; but sewer I be, they be two o' the purtiest gels ye can see of a summer murnin'.

2nd Farming Man. Beänt Miss Eva gone off a bit of 'er good looks o' laäte?

1st Farming Man. Noä, not a bit.

2nd Farming Man. Why coöm awaäy, then, to the long barn.

[*Exeunt.*]

DORA looks out of window. Enter DOBSON.

Dora (singing).

The town lay still in the low sunlight,

The hen cluckt late by the white farm gate,

The maid to her dairy came in from the cow,

The stock-dove coo'd at the fall of night,

The blossom had open'd on every bough;

O joy for the promise of May, of
May,

O joy for the promise of May.

(*Nodding at Dobson.*) I'm coming
down, Mr. Dobson. I haven't seen
Eva yet. Is she anywhere in the
garden?

Dobson. Noä, Miss. I ha'n't seed
'er neither.

Dora (enters singing).

But a red fire woke in the heart of the
town,

And a fox from the glen ran away
with the hen,

And a cat to the cream, and a rat to
the cheese;

And the stock-dove coo'd, till a kite
dropt down,

And a salt wind burnt the blossoming
trees;

O grief for the promise of May, of
May,

O grief for the promise of May.

I don't know why I sing that song; I
don't love it.

Dobson. Blessings on your pretty
voice, Miss Dora. Wheer did they
larn ye that?

Dora. In Cumberland, Mr. Dob-
son.

Dobson. An' how did ye leave the
owd uncle i' Coomberland?

Dora. Getting better, Mr. Dobson.
But he'll never be the same man again.

Dobson. An' how d'ye find the owd
man 'ere?

Dora. As well as ever. I came
back to keep his birthday.

Dobson. Well, I be coomed to keep
his birthdaäy an' all. The owd man
be heighty to-daäy, beänt he?

Dora. Yes, Mr. Dobson. And the
day's bright like a friend, but the wind
east like an enemy. Help me to move
this bench for him into the sun.
(*They move bench.*) No, not that way
—here, under the apple tree. Thank
you. Look how full of rosy blossom
it is. [*Pointing to apple tree.*]

Dobson. Their be redder blossoms
nor them, Miss Dora.

Dora. Where do they blow, Mr.
Dobson?

Dobson. Under your eyes, Miss
Dora.

Dora. Do they?

Dobson. And your eyes be as blue
as—

Dora. What, Mr. Dobson? A
butcher's frock?

Dobson. Noä, Miss Dora; as blue
as—

Dora. Bluebell, harebell, speed-
well, bluebottle, succory, forget-me-
not?

Dobson. Noä, Miss Dora; as blue
as—

Dora. The sky? or the sea on a
blue day?

Dobson. Naäy then. I meän'd
they be as blue as violets.

Dora. Are they?

Dobson. Their ye goäs ageän,
Miss, niver believing owt I says to ye
—hallus a-fobbing ma off, tho' ye
knows I love ye. I warrants ye'll
think moor o' this young Squire
Edgar as ha' coomed among us—the
Lord knows how—ye'll think more on
'is little finger than hall my hand at
the haltar.

Dora. Perhaps, Master Dobson.
I can't tell, for I have never seen
him. But my sister wrote that he
was mighty pleasant, and had no
pride in him.

Dobson. He'll be arter you now,
Miss Dora.

Dora. Will he? How can I tell?

Dobson. He's been arter Miss Eva,
haän't he?

Dora. Not that I know.

Dobson. Didn't I spy 'em a-sitting
i' the woodbine harbor together?

Dora. What of that? Eva told
me that he was taking her likeness.
He's an artist.

Dobson. What's a hartist? I doän't
believe he's iver a 'eart under his
waistcoat. And I tells ye what, Miss
Dora: he's no respect for the Queen,
or the parson, or the justice o' peace,
or owt. I ha' heärd 'im a-gawin' on
'ud make your 'air—God bless it!—

stan' on end. And wuss nor that. When theer wur a meeting o' farmers at Littlechester t'other daay, and they was all a-crying out at the bad times, he cooms up, and he calls out among our oän men, 'The land belongs to the people!'

Dora. And what did you say to that?

Dobson. Well, I says, s'pose my pig's the land, and you says it belongs to the parish, and theer be a thousand i' the parish, taäkin' in the women and childer; and s'pose I kills my pig, and gi'es it among 'em, why there wudn't be a dinner for nawbody, and I should ha' lost the pig.

Dora. And what did he say to that?

Dobson. Nowt—what could he saay? But I taäkes 'im fur a bad lot and a burn foot, and I haätes the very sight on him.

Dora (looking at Dobson). Master Dobson, you are a comely man to look at.

Dobson. I thank you for that, Miss Dora, onyhow.

Dora. Ay, but you turn right ugly when you're in an ill temper; and I promise you that if you forget yourself in your behavior to this gentleman, my father's friend, I will never change word with you again.

Enter FARMING MAN from barn.

Farming Man. Miss, the farming men 'ull hev their dinner i' the long barn, and the master 'ud be straänge an' pleased if you'd step in fust, and see that all be right and reg'lar fur 'em afoor he coöm.

{*Exit.*}

Dora. I go. Master Dobson, did you hear what I said?

Dobson. Yeas, yeas! I'll not meddle wi' 'im if he doänt meddle wi' meä. (*Exit Dora.*) Coomly, says she. I niver thowt o' mysen i' that waäy; but if she'd taäke to ma i' that waäy, or ony waäy, I'd slaäve out my life fur 'er. 'Coomly to look at,' says she—but she said it spiteful-like. To

look at—yeas, 'coomly'; and she mayn't be so fur out theer. But if that be nowt to she, then it be nowt to me. (*Looking off stage.*) Schoolmaster! Why if Steer han't haxed schoolmaster to dinner, thaw'e knaws I was hallus ageän heving schoolmaster i' the parish! fur him as be handy wi' a book bean't but haäfe a hand at a pitchfork.

Enter WILSON.

Well, Wilson. I seed that one cow 'o thine i' the pinfold ageän as I wur a-coomin' 'ere.

Wilson. Very likely, Mr. Dobson. She will break fence. I can't keep her in order.

Dobson. An' if tha can't keep thy one cow i' horder, how can tha keep all thy scholars i' horder? But let that goä by. What dost a-know o' this Mr. Hedgar as be a-lodgin' wi' ye? I coom'd upon 'im t'other daäy lookin' at the coöntry, then a-scrattin upon a bit o' paäper, then a-lookin' ageän; and I taäked 'im fur soom sort of a land-surveyor—but a heänt.

Wilson. He's a Somersetshire man, and a very civil-spoken gentleman.

Dobson. Gentleman! What be he a-doing here ten mile an' moor fro' a raäil? We laävs out o' the waäy fur gentlefoälk altogether—leästwaäys they niver cooms 'ere but fur the trout i' our beck, fur they be knaw'd as far as Littlechester. But 'e doänt fish neither.

Wilson. Well, it's no sin in a gentleman not to fish.

Dobson. Noä, but I haätes 'im.

Wilson. Better step out of his road, then, for he's walking to us, and with a book in his hand.

Dobson. An' I haätes booöks an' all, fur they puts foälk off the owd waäys.

Enter EDGAR, reading—not seeing DOBSON and WILSON.

Edgar. This author, with his
charm of simple style
And close dialectic, all but proving
man

An automatic series of sensations,
Has often numb'd me into apathy
Against the unpleasant jolts of this
rough road

That breaks off short into the abysses
—made me

A Quietist taking all things easily.

Dobson. (Aside.) There mun be
summut wrong theer, Wilson, fur I
doänt understan' it.

Wilson. (Aside.) Nor I either,
Mr. Dobson.

Dobson (scornfully). An' thou
doänt understan' it neither—and thou
schoolmaster an' all.

Edgar. What can a man, then,
live for but sensations,
Pleasant ones? men of old would un-
dergo

Unpleasant for the sake of pleasant
ones

Hereafter, like the Moslem beauties
waiting

To clasp their lovers by the golden
gates.

For me, whose cheerless Houris after
death

Are Night and Silence, pleasant ones
—the while—

If possible, here! to crop the flower
and pass.

Dobson. Well, I never 'eärd the
likes o' that afoor.

Wilson. (Aside.) But I have, Mr.
Dobson. It's the old Scripture text,
'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow
we die.' I'm sorry for it, for, tho' he
never comes to church, I thought bet-
ter of him.

Edgar. 'What are we, says the
blind old man in Lear?

'As flies to the Gods; they kill us for
their sport.'

Dobson. (Aside.) Then the owd
man i' Lear should be shaämed of
hissen, but noän o' the parishes goäs
by that naäme 'creabouts.

Edgar. The Gods! but they, the
shadows of ourselves,

Have past for ever. It is Nature
kills,

And not for *her* sport either. She
knows nothing.

Man only knows, the worse for him!
for why

Cannot *he* take his pastime like the
flies?

And if my pleasure breed another's
pain,

Well—is not that the course of Na-
ture too,

From the dim dawn of Being—her
main law

Whereby she grows in beauty—that
her flies

Must massacre each other? this poor
Nature!

Dobson. Natur! Natur! Well, it
be i' *my* natur to knock 'im o' the 'eärd
now; but I weänt.

Edgar. A Quietist taking all
things easily—why—

Have I been dipping into this again
To steel myself against the leaving
her?

[Closes book, seeing Wilson.
Good day!

Wilson. Good day, sir.

[Dobson looks hard at Edgar.

Edgar (to Dobson). Have I the
pleasure, friend, of knowing you?

Dobson. Dobson.

Edgar. Good day, then, Dobson.

[Exit.
Dobson. 'Good daäy then, Dob-
son!' Civil-spoken i'deed! Why,
Wilson; tha 'eärd 'im thysen—the fel-
ler couldn't find a Mister in his mouth
fur me, as farms five hoönderd
haäcre.

Wilson. You never find one for
me, Mr. Dobson.

Dobson. Noä, fur thou be nobbut
schoolmaster; but I taäkes 'im for a
Lunnur swindler, and a burn fool.

Wilson. He can hardly be both,
and he pays me regular every Satur-
day.

Dobson. Veas; but I haätes 'im.

Enter STEER, FARM MEN and
WOMEN.

Steer (goes and sits under apple tree).
Hev' ony o' ye seen Eva?

Dobson. Noä, Mr. Steer.

Steer. Well, I reckons they'll hev' a fine cider-crop to-year if the blossom 'owds. Good mornin', neighbors, and the saäme to you, my men. I taäkes it kindly of all o' you that you be doomed—what's the newspaäper word, Wilson?—celebrate—to celebrate my birthdaäy i' this fashion. Niver man 'ed better friends, and I will saäy niver master 'ed better men: fur thaw I may ha' fallen out wi' ye sometimes, the fault, mebbe, wur as much mine as yours; and, thaw I says it mysen, niver men 'ed a better master—and I knaws what men be, and what masters be, fur I wur nobbut a laäborer, and now I be a landlord—burn a plowman, and now, as far as money goäs, I be a gentleman, thaw I beänt naw scholar, fur I 'ednt naw time to maäke mysen a scholar while I wur maäkin' mysen a gentleman, but I ha taäen good care to turn out boäth my darters right down fine laädies.

Dobson. An' soä they be.

1st Farming Man. Soä they be! soä they be!

2nd Farming Man. The Lord bless boäth on 'em!

3rd Farming Man. An' the saäme to you, Master.

4th Farming Man. And long life to boäth on 'em. An' the saäme to you, Master Steer, likewise.

Steer. Thank ye!

Enter EVA.

Wheer 'asta been?

Eva (timidly). Many happy returns of the day, father.

Steer. They can't be many, my dear, but I oäpes they'll be 'appy.

Dobson. Why, tha looks haäle anew to last to a hoonderd.

Steer. An' why shouldn't I last to a hoonderd? Haäle! why shouldn't I be haäle? fur thaw I be heigty this very daäy, I niver 'es sa much as one

pin's prick of paäin; an' I can taäke my glass along wi' the youngest, fur I niver touched a drop of owt till my oän wedding-daäy, an' then I wur turned huppads o' sixty. Why shouldn't I be haäle? I ha' plowed the ten-aäcre—it be mine now—afoor ony o' ye wur burn—ye all knaws the ten-aäcre—I mun ha' plowed it moor nor a hoonderd times; hallus hup at sunrise, and I'd drive the plow straät as a line right i' the faäce o' the sun, then back ageän, a-follering my oän shadder—then hup ageän i' the faäce o' the sun. Eh! how the sun 'ud shine, and the larks 'ud sing i' them daäys, and the smell o' the mou'd an' all. Eh! if I could ha' gone on wi' the plowin', nobbut the smell o' the mou'd 'ud ha' maäde ma live as long as Jerusalem.

Eva. Methusaleh, father.

Steer. Ay, lass, but when thou be as owd as me thou'll put one word fur another as I does.

Dobson. But, Steer, thaw thou be haäle anew I seed tha a-limpin' up just now with the roomatics i' the knee.

Steer. Roomatics! Noä; I laäme't my knee last night running arter a thief. Heänt there house-breakers down i' Littlechester, Dobson—doänt ye hear of ony?

Dobson. Ay, that there be. Immanuel Goldsmiths was broke into o' Monday night, and ower a hoonderd pounds worth o' rings stolen.

Steer. So I thowt, and I heärd the winder—that's the winder at the end o' the passage, that goäs by thy chaumber. (*Turning to Eva.*) Why, lass, what maäkes tha sa red? Did 'e git into thy chaumber?

* *Eva.* Father!

Steer. Well, I runned arter thief i' the dark, and fell ageän coalscuttle and my kneä gev waäy or I'd ha' cotched 'im, but afoor I coomed up he got thruff the winder ageän.

Eva. Got thro' the window again?

Steer. Ay, but he left the mark of 'is foot i' the flower-bed; now ther be noän o' my men, thinks I to mysen,

'ud ha' done it 'cep' it were Dan Smith, fur I cotched 'im once a-stealin' coals an' I sent fur im, an' I measured his foot wi' the mark i' the bed, but it wouldn't fit—seeäms to me the mark wur maäde by a Lunnun boot. (*Looks at Eva.*) Why, now, what maäkes tha sa white?

Eva. Fright, father!

Steer. Maäke thysen eäsy. I'll hev the winder naäiled up, and put Towser under it.

Eva (*clasp ing her hands*). No, no, father! Towser'll tear him all to pieces.

Steer. Let him keep awaäy, then; but coom, coom! let's be gawin. They ha' broached a barrel of aäle i' the long barn, and the fiddler be theer, and the lads and lasses 'ull hev a dance.

Eva. (*Aside.*) Dance! small heart have I to dance. I should seem to be dancing upon a grave.

Steer. Wheer be Mr. Edgar? about the premises?

Dobson. Hallus about the premises!

Steer. So much the better, so much the better. I likes 'im, and Eva likes 'im. Eva can do owt wi' 'im; look for 'im, Eva, and bring 'im to the barn. He 'ant naw pride in 'im, and we'll git 'im to speechify for us arter dinner.

Eva. Yes, father! [*Exit.*

Steer. Coom along then, all the rest o' ye! Churchwarden be a coomin, thaw me and 'im we niver 'grees about the tithe; and Parson mebbe, thaw he niver mended that gap i' the glebe fence as I telled 'im; and Blacksmith, thaw he niver shoes a herse to my likings; and Baäker, thaw I sticks to hoäm-maäde—but all on 'em welcome, all on 'em welcome; and I've hed the long barn cleared out of all the machines, and the sacks, and the taäters, and the mangles, and theer'll be room anew for all o' ye. Foller me.

All. Yeas, yeas! Three cheers for Mr. Steer!

[*All exunt except Dobson into barn.*]

Enter EDGAR.

Dobson (*who is going, turns*). Squire!—if so be you be a squire.

Edgar. Dobbins, I think.

Dobson. Dobbins, you thinks; and I thinks ye weärs a Lunnun boot.

Edgar. Well?

Dobson. And I thinks I'd like to taäke the measure o' your foot.

Edgar. Ay, if you'd like to measure your own length upon the grass.

Dobson. Coom, coom, that's a good un. Why, I could throw four o' ye; but I promised one of the Misses I wouldn't meddle wi' ye, and I weänt.

[*Exit into barn.*

Edgar. Jealous of me with Eva!

Is it so?

Well, tho' I grudge the pretty jewel, that I

Have worn, to such a clod, yet that might be

The best way out of it, if the child could keep

Her counsel. I am sure I wish her happy.

But I must free myself from this entanglement.

I have all my life before me—so has she—

Give her a month or two, and her affections

Will flower toward the light in some new face.

Still I am half-afraid to meet her now. She will urge marriage on me. I

hate tears.

Marriage is but an old tradition. I hate

Traditions, ever since my narrow father,

After my frolic with his tenant's girl, Made younger elder son, violated the whole

Tradition of our land, and left his heir,

Born, happily, with some sense of art, to live

By brush and pencil. By and by, when Thought

Comes down among the crowd, and man perceives that

The lost gleam of an after-life but
leaves him
A beast of prey in the dark, why then
the crowd
May wreak my wrongs upon my
wrongers. Marriage!
That fine, fat, hook-nosed uncle of
mine, old Harold,
Who leaves me all his land at Little-
chester,
He, too, would oust me from his will,
if I
Made such a marriage. And mar-
riage in itself—
The storm is hard at hand will sweep
away
Thrones, churches, ranks, traditions,
customs, marriage
One of the feeblest! Then the man,
the woman,
Following their best affinities, will
each
Bid their old bond farewell with
smiles, not tears;
Good wishes, not reproaches; with
no fear
Of the world's gossiping clamor, and
no need
Of veiling their desires.
Conventionalism,
Who shrieks by day at what she does
by night,
Would call this vice; but one time's
vice may be
The virtue of another; and Vice and
Virtue
Are but two masks of self; and what
hereafter
Shall mark out Vice from Virtue in
the gulf
Of never-dawning darkness?

Enter EVA.

My sweet Eva,
Where have you lain in ambush all
the morning?
They say your sister, Dora, has
return'd,
And that should make you happy, if
you love her!
But you look troubled.

Eva.

Oh, I love her so,

I was afraid of her, and I hid myself.
We never kept a secret from each
other;
She would have seen at once into my
trouble,
And ask'd me what I could not
answer. Oh, Philip,
Father heard you last night. Our
savage mastiff,
That all but kill'd the beggar, will be
placed
Beneath the window, I'llip.

Edgar. Savage, is he?
What matters? Come, give me your
hand and kiss me

This beautiful May-morning.

Eva. The most beautiful
May we have had for many years!

Edgar. And here
Is the most beautiful morning of this
May.

Nay, you must smile upon me! There
—you make

The May and morning still more
beautiful,

You, the most beautiful blossom of
the May.

Eva. Dear Philip, all the world is
beautiful

If we were happy, and could chime in
with it.

Edgar. True; for the senses, love,
are for the world;

That for the senses.

Eva. Yes.

Edgar. And when the man,
The child of evolution, flings aside
His swaddling-bands, the morals of
the tribe,
He, following his own instincts as his
God,

Will enter on the larger golden age;
No pleasure then taboo'd: for when
the tide

Of full democracy has overwhelm'd
This Old world, from that flood will
rise the New,

Like the Love-goddess, with no bridal
veil,

Ring, trinket of the Church, but
naked Nature

In all her loveliness.

Eva.

What are you saying?

Edgar. That, if we did not strain
to make ourselves
Better and higher than Nature, we
might be
As happy as the bees there at their
honey
In these sweet blossoms.

Eva. Yes; how sweet they smell!

Edgar. There! let me break some
off for you.

[*Breaking branch off.*

Eva. My thanks.
But, look, how wasteful of the blossom
you are!

One, two, three, four, five, six—you
have robb'd poor father
Of ten good apples. Oh, I forgot
to tell you

He wishes you to dine along with us,
And speak for him after—you that
are so clever!

Edgar. I grieve I cannot; but, in-
deed—

Eva. What is it?

Edgar. Well, business. I must
leave you, love, to-day.

Eva. Leave me, to-day! And
when will you return?

Edgar. I cannot tell precisely;
but—

Eva. But what?

Edgar. I trust, my dear, we shall
be always friends.

Eva. After all that has gone be-
tween us—friends!

What, only friends? [*Drops branch.*

Edgar. All that has gone between
us

Should surely make us friends.

Eva. But keep us lovers.

Edgar. Child, do you love me
now?

Eva. Yes, now and ever.

Edgar. Then you should wish us
both to love for ever.

But, if you *will* bind love to one for
ever,

Altho' at first he take his bonds for
flowers,

As years go on, he feels them press
upon him,

Begins to flutter in them, and at
last

Breaks thro' them, and so flies away
for ever;

While, had you left him free use of
his wings,

Who knows that he had ever dream'd
of flying?

Eva. But all that sounds so wicked
and so strange;

'Till death us part'—those are the
only words,

The true ones—nay, and those not
true enough,

For they that love do not believe that
death

Will part them. Why do you jest
with me, and try

To fright me? Tho' you are a gentle-
man,

I but a farmer's daughter—

Edgar. Tut! you talk
Old feudalism. When the great De-
mocracy

Makes a new world—

Eva. And if you be not jesting,
Neither the old world, nor the new,

nor father,
Sister, nor you, shall ever see me

more.

Edgar (*moved*). Then—(*aside*)

Shall I say it?—(*aloud*) fly with
me to-day.

Eva. No! Philip, Philip, if you do
not marry me,

I shall go mad for utter shame and
die.

Edgar. Then, if we needs must be
conventional,

When shall your parish-parson bawl
our banns

Before your gaping clowns?

Eva. Not in our church—
I think I scarce could hold my head

up there.

Is there no other way?

Edgar. Yes, if you cared
To fee an over-opulent superstition,

Then they would grant you what they
call a license

To marry. Do you wish it?

Eva. Do I wish it?

Edgar. In London.

Eva. You will write to me?

Edgar. I will.

Eva. And I will fly to you thro'
the night, the storm—
Ves, tho' the fire should run along the
ground,
As once it did in Egypt. Oh, you
see,
I was just out of school, I had no
mother—
My sister far away—and you, a gen-
tleman,
Told me to trust you: yes, in every-
thing—
That was the only true love; and I
trusted—
Oh, yes, indeed, I would have died for
you.
How could you—Oh, how could you?
—nay, how could I?
But now you will set all right again,
and I
Shall not be made the laughter of the
village,
And poor old father not die misera-
ble.

Dora (singing in the distance).

O joy for the promise of May, of
May.

O joy for the promise of May.

Edgar. Speak not so loudly; that
must be your sister.

You never told her, then, of what has
past
Between us.

Eva. Never!

Edgar. Do not till I bid you.

Eva. No, Philip, no.

[*Turns away.*]

Edgar (moved). How gracefully
there she stands

Weeping—the little Niobe! What!
we prize

The statue or the picture all the more
When we have made them ours! Is
she less loveable,

Less lovely, being wholly mine? To
stay—

Follow my art among these quiet
fields,

Live with these honest folk—

And play the fool!

No! she that gave herself to me so
easily

Will yield herself as easily to another.

Eva. Did you speak, Philip?

Edgar. Nothing more, farewell.
[*They embrace.*]

Dora (coming nearer).

O grief for the promise of May,
of May,

O grief for the promise of May.

Edgar (still embracing her). Keep
up your heart until we meet
again.

Eva. If that should break before
we meet again?

Edgar. Break! nay, but call for
Philip when you will,
And he returns.

Eva. Heaven hears you, Philip
Edgar!

Edgar (moved). And he would
hear you even from the grave.
Heaven curse him if he come not at
your call! [*Exit.*]

Enter DORA.

Dora. Well, Eva!

Eva. Oh, Dora, Dora, how long
you have been away from home! Oh,
how often I have wished for you! It
seemed to me that we were parted for
ever.

Dora. For ever, you foolish child!
What's come over you? We parted
like the brook yonder about the alder
island, to come together again in a
moment and to go on together again,
till one of us be married. But where
is this Mr. Edgar whom you praised
so in your first letters? You haven't
even mentioned him in your last?

Eva. He has gone to London.

Dora. Ay, child; and you look
thin and pale. Is it for his absence?
Have you fancied yourself in love with
him? That's all nonsense, you know,
such a baby as you are. But you
shall tell me all about it.

Eva. Not now—presently. Yes, I
have been in trouble, but I am happy
—I think, quite happy now.

Dora (taking Eva's hand). Come,
then, and make them happy in the
long barn, for father is in his glory,
and there is a piece of beef like a

house-side, and a plum-pudding as big as the round hay-stack. But see they are coming out for the dance already. Well, my child, let us join them.

Enter all from barn laughing. EVA sits reluctantly under apple tree. STEER enters smoking, sits by EVA.

Dance.

ACT II.

Five years have elapsed between Acts I. and II.

SCENE.—A MEADOW. ON ONE SIDE A PATHWAY GOING OVER A RUSTIC BRIDGE. AT BACK THE FARMHOUSE AMONG TREES. IN THE DISTANCE A CHURCH SPIRE.

DOBSON and DORA.

Dobson. So the owd uncle i' Coomberland be dead, Miss Dora, beänt he?

Dora. Yes, Mr. Dobson, I've been attending on his deathbed and his burial.

Dobson. It be five year sin' ye went afoor to him, and it seems to me nobbut t'other day. Hesn't he left ye nowt?

Dora. No, Mr. Dobson.

Dobson. But he were mighty fond o' ye, warn't he?

Dora. Fonder of poor Eva—like everybody else.

Dobson (handing Dora basket of roses). Not like me, Miss Dora; and I ha' browt these roses to ye—I forgits what they calls 'em, but I hallus g'ied soom on 'em to Miss Eva at this time o' year. Will ya taäke 'em? fur Miss Eva, she set the bnsh by my dairy winder afoor she went to school at Littlechester—so I allus browt soom on 'em to her; and now she be gone, will ye taäke 'em, Miss Dora?

Dora. I thank you. They tell me that yesterday you mentioned her name too suddenly before my father. See that you do not do so again!

Dobson. Noä; I knaws a deäl better now. I seed how the owd man wur vext.

Dora. I take them, then, for Eva's sake.

[Takes basket, places some in her dress.]

Dobson. Eva's saäke. Yeas. Poor gel, poor gel! I can't abear to think on 'er now, fur I'd ha' done owt fur 'er nysen; an' ony o' Steer's men, an' ony o' my men 'ud ha' done owt fur 'er, an' all the parish 'ud ha' done owt fur 'er, fur we was all on us proud on 'er, an' them theer be soom of her oan roses, an' she wur as sweet as ony on 'em—the Lord bless 'er—'er oan sen; an' weänt ye taäke 'em now, Miss Dora, fur 'er saäke an' fur my saäke an' all?

Dora. De you want them back again?

Dobson. Noa, noä! Keep 'em. But I hed a word to saäy to ye.

Dora. Why, Farmer, you should be in the hayfield looking after your men; you couldn't have more splendid weather.

Dobson. I be a going theer; but I thowt I'd bring tha them roses fust. The weather's well anew, but the glass be a bit shaäky. S'iver we've led moäst on it.

Dora. Ay! but you must not be too sudden with it either, as you were last year, when you put it in green, and your stack caught fire.

Dobson. I were insured, Miss, an' I lost nowt by it. But I weänt be too sudden wi' it; and I feel sewer, Miss Dora, that I ha' been noän too sudden wi' you, fur I ha' sarved for ye well nigh as long as the man sarved for 'is sweet'art i' Scriptur'. Weänt ye g'e me a kind answer at last?

Dora. I have no thought of marriage, my friend. We have been in such grief these five years, not only on my sister's account, but the ill success of the farm, and the debts, and my father's breaking down, and his blindness. How could I think of leaving him?

Dobson. Eh, but I be well to do; and if ye would nohbut hev me, I would taäke the owd blind man to my oän fireside. You should hev him allus wi' ye.

Dora. You are generous, but it cannot be. I cannot love you; nay, I think I never can be brought to love any man. It seems to me that I hate men, ever since my sister left us. Oh, see here. (*Pulls out a letter.*) I wear it next my heart. Poor sister, I had it five years ago. 'Dearest Dora,—I have lost myself, and am lost for ever to you and my poor father. I thought Mr. Edgar the best of men, and he has proved himself the worst. Seek not for me, or you may find me at the bottom of the river.

EVA.'

Dobson. Be that my fault?

Dora. No; but how should I, with this grief still at my heart, take to the milking of your cows, the fattening of your calves, the making of your butter, and the managing of your poultry?

Dobson. Naäy, but I hev an owd woman as 'ud see to all that; and you should sit i' your oän parlor quite like a laädy, ye should!

Dora. It cannot be.

Dobson. And plaäy the pianner, if ye liked, all daäy long, like a laädy, ye should an' all.

Dora. It cannot be.

Dobson. And I would loove tha moor nor ony gentlian 'ud loove tha.

Dora. No, no; it cannot be.

Dobson. And p'raps ye hears 'at I soomtimes taäkes a drop too much; but that be all along o' you, Miss, because ye weänt hev me; but, if ye would, I could put all that o' one side eäsy anew.

Dora. Cannot you understand plain words, Mr. Dobson? I tell you, it cannot be.

Dobson. Eh, lass! Thy feyther eddicated his darters to marry gentle-folk, and see what's coomed on it.

Dora. That is enough, Farmer

Dobson. You have shown me that, though fortune had horn you into the estate of a gentleman, you would still have been Farmer Dobson. You had better attend to your hay-field. Good afternoon. [*Exit.*]

Dobson. 'Farmer Dobson!' Well, I be Farmer Dobson; but I thinks Farmer Dobson's dog 'ud ha' know'd better nor to cast her sister's misfortin inter 'er teeth arter she'd been a-readin' me the letter wi' 'er voice a-shaäkin', and the drop in 'er eye. Theer she goäs! Shall I foller 'er and ax 'er to maäke it up? Noä, not yet. Let 'er cool upon it; I likes 'er all the better fur taäkin' me down, like a laädy, as she be. Farmer Dobson! I be Farmer Dobson, sewer anew; but if iver I cooms upo' Gentleman Hedgar ageän, and doänt laäy my cartwhip athurt 'is shou'ders, why then I beänt Farmer Dobson, but summun else—blaäme't if I beänt!

Enter HAYMAKERS with a load of hay.

The last on it, eh?

1st Haymaker. Yeas.

Dobson. Hoäm wi' it, then.

[*Exit surlily.*]

1st Haymaker. Well, it be the last load hoäm.

2nd Haymaker. Yeas, an' owd Dobson should be glad on it. What maäkes 'im allus sa glum?

Sally Allen. Glum! he be wuss nor glum. He coom'd up to me yister-daäy i' the haäyfield, when mea and my sweet'art was a workin' along o' one side wi' one another, and he sent 'im awaäy to t'other end o' the field; and when I axed 'im why, he telled me 'at sweet'arts niver worked well together; and I telled 'im 'at sweet'arts allus worked best together; and then he called me a rude naäme, and I can't abide 'im.

James. Why, lass, doänt tha know he be sweet upo' Dora Steer, and she weänt sa much as look at 'im? And wheniver 'e sees two sweet'arts

together like thou and me, Sally, he be fit to bust hissen wi' spites and jealousies.

Sally. Let 'im bust hissen, then, for owd I cares.

1st Haymaker. Well but, as I said afore, it be the last load hoām; do thou and thy sweet'art sing us hoām to supper—'The Last Load Hoām.'

All. Ay! 'The Last Load Hoām.'

Song.

What did ye do, and what did ye saäy,

Wi' the wild white rose, an' the wood-bine sa gaäy,

An' the midders all mow'd, an' the skys sa blue—

What did ye saäy, and what did ye do,

When ye thowt there were nawbody watchin' o' you,

And you an' your Sally was forkin' the haäy,

At the end of the daäy,
For the last load hoām?

What did we do, and what did we saäy,

Wi' the briar sa green, an' the willer sa graäy,

An' the midders all mow'd, an' the sky sa blue—

Do ye think I be gawin' to tell it to you,

What we mowt saäy, and what we mowt do,

When me an' my Sally was forkin' the haäy,

At the end of the daäy,
For the last load hoām?

But what did ye saäy, and what did ye do,

Wi' the butterflies out, and the swallers at plaäy,

An' the midders all mow'd, an' the sky sa blue?

Why, coom then, owd feller, I'll tell it to you;

For me an' my Sally we swcär'd to be true,

To be true to each other, let 'appen what maäy,
Till the end of the daäy
And the last load hoām.

All. Well sung!

James. Fanny be the naäme i' the song, but I swopt it fur *she*.

[*Pointing to Sally.*]

Sally. Let ma aloän afore foälk, wilt tha?

1st Haymaker. Ve shall sing that ageän to-night, fur owd Dobson 'll gi'e us a bit o' supper.

Sally. I weänt goä to owd Dobson; he wur rude to me i' tha haäy-field, and he'll be rude to me ageän to-night. Owd Steer's gotten all his grass down and wants a hand, and I'll goä to him.

1st Haymaker. Owd Steer gi'es nubbut cowl tea to 'is men, and owd Dobson gi'es beer.

Sally. But I'd like owd Steer's cowl tea better nor Dobson's beer. Good-bye.

James. Gi'e us a buss fust, lass.

Sally. I tell'd tha to let ma aloän!

James. Why, wasn't thou and me a-bussin' o' one another t'other side o' the haäycock, when owd Dobson coom'd upo' us? I can't let tha aloän if I would, Sally. [*Offering to kiss her.*]

Sally. Git along wi' ye, do! [*Exit.*]

[*All laugh; exeunt singing.*]

'To be true to each other, let 'appen what maäy,
Till the end o' the daäy
An' the last load hoām.

Enter HAROLD.

Harold. Not Harold! 'Philip Edgar, Philip Edgar!' Her phantom call'd me by the name she loved.

I told her I should hear her from the grave.

Ay! yonder is her casement. I remember

Her bright face beaming starlike down upon me

Thro' that rich cloud of blossom.
 Since I left her
 Here weeping, I have ranged the
 world, and sat
 Thro' every sensual course of that
 full feast
 That leaves but emptiness.

Song.

'To be true to each other, let 'appen
 what maäy.
 To the end o' the daäy
 An' the last loäd hoäm.'

Harold. Poor Eva! O my God, if
 man be only
 A willy-nilly current of sensations—
 Reaction needs must follow revel—
 yet—
 Why feel remorse, he, knowing that
 he *must* have
 Moved in the iron grooves of Destiny?
 Remorse then is a part of Destiny,
 Nature a liar, making us feel guilty
 Of her own faults.

My grandfather—of him
 They say, that women—

O this mortal house,
 Which we are born into, is haunted by
 The ghosts of the dead passions of
 dead men;
 And these take flesh again with our
 own flesh,
 And bring us to confusion.

He was only
 A poor philosopher who call'd the
 mind
 Of children a blank page, a *tabula rasa*.
 There, there, is written in invisible inks
 'Lust, Prodigality, Covetousness,
 Craft,
 Cowardice, Murder'—and the heat and
 fire
 Of life will bring them out, and black
 enough,
 So the child grow to manhood: better
 death
 With our first wail then life—

Song (further off).

'Till the end o' the daäy
 An' the last loäd hoäm,
 Loäd hoäm.'

This bridge again! (*Steps on the
 bridge.*)

How often have I stood
 With Eva here! The brook among
 its flowers!

Forget-me-not, meadowsweet, willow-
 herb.

I had some smattering of science then,
 Taught her the learned names, anat-
 omized

The flowers for her—and now I only
 wish

This pool were deep enough, that I
 might plunge
 And lose myself for ever.

Enter DAN SMITH (singing).

Gee oop! whoä! Gee oop! whoä!
 Scizzars an' Pumpy was good uns to
 goä

Thruf slash an' squad
 When roäds was bad,
 But hallus ud stop at the Vinc-an'-the-
 Hop,

Fur boäth on 'em knawed as well as
 nysen
 That beer be as good fur 'erses as
 men.

Gee oop! whoä! Gee oop!
 whoä!
 Scizzars an' Pumpy was good uns to
 goä.

The beer's gotten oop into my 'eäd.
 S'iver I mun git along back to the
 farm, fur she tell'd ma to taäke the
 cart to Littlechester.

Enter DORA.

Half an hour late! why are you
 loitering here? Away with you at
 once.

[*Exit Dan Smith.*]
 (*Seeing Harold on bridge.*)

Some madman, is it,
 Gesticulating there upon the bridge?
 I am half afraid to pass.

Harold. Sometimes I wonder,
 When man has surely learnt at last
 that all

His old-world faith, the blossom of
 his youth,
 Has faded, falling fruitless—whether
 then

All of us, all at once, may not be seized

With some fierce passion, not so much for Death

As against Life! all, all, into the dark—

No more!—and science now could drug and balm us

Back into nescience with as little pain As it is to fall asleep.

This beggarly life, This poor, flat, hedged-in field—no distance—this

Hollow Pandora-box, With all the pleasures flown, not even

Hope Left at the bottom!

Superstitious fool, What brought me here? To see her grave? her ghost?

Her ghost is everyway about me here.

Dora (coming forward). Allow me, sir, to pass you.

Harold. Eva!

Dora. Eva!

Harold. What are you? Where do you come from?

Dora. From the farm Here, close at hand.

Harold. Are you—you are—that

Dora. The likeness

Is very striking.

Dora. You knew Eva, then?

Harold. Yes—I was thinking of her when—O yes,

Many years back, and never since have met

Her equal for pure innocence of nature,

And loveliness of feature.

Dora. No, nor I.

Harold. Except, indeed, I have found it once again In your own self.

Dora. You flatter me. Dear Eva Was always thought the prettier.

Harold. And her charm Of voice is also yours; and I was brooding

Upon a great unhappiness when you spoke.

Dora. Indeed, you seem'd in trouble, sir.

Harold. And you Seem my good angel who may help me from it.

Dora (aside). How worn he looks, poor man! who is it, I wonder. How can I help him? (*Aloud.*) Might I ask your name?

Harold. Harold.

Dora. I never heard her mention you.

Harold. I met her first at a farm in Cumberland—

Her uncle's.

Dora. She was there six years ago.

Harold. And if she never mention'd me, perhaps The painful circumstances which I heard—

I will not vex you by repeating them— Only last week at Littlechester, drove me

From out her memory. She has disappeared,

They told me, from the farm—and darker news.

Dora. She has disappear'd, poor darling, from the world—

Left but one dreadful line to say, that we

Should find her in the river; and we dragg'd

The Littlechester river all in vain:

Have sorrow'd for her all these years in vain.

And my poor father, utterly broken down

By losing her—she was his favorite child—

Has let his farm, all his affairs, I fear, But for the slender help that I can

give, Fall into ruin. Ah! that villain,

Edgar, If he should ever show his face

among us, Our men and boys would hoot him,

stone him, hunt him With pitchforks off the farm, for all

of them Loved her, and she was worthy of all

love.

Harold. They say, we should forgive our enemies.

Dora. Ay, if the wretch were dead I might forgive him;

We know not whether he be dead or living.

Harold. What Edgar?

Dora. Philip Edgar of Toft Hall In Somerset. Perhaps you know him?

Harold. Slightly.

(*Aside.*) Ay, for how slightly have I known myself.

Dora. This Edgar, then, is living?

Harold. Living? well—
One Philip Edgar of Toft Hall in Somerset

Is lately dead.

Dora. Dead!—is there more than one?

Harold. Nay—now—not one, (*aside*) for I am Philip Harold.

Dora. That one, is he then—dead!

Harold. (*Aside.*) My father's death,
Let her believe it mine; this, for the moment,
Will leave me a free field.

Dora. Dead! and this world
Is brighter for his absence as that other
Is darker for his presence.

Harold. Is not this
To speak too pitilessly of the dead?

Dora. My five-years' anger cannot die at once,

Not all at once with death and him.
I trust

I shall forgive him—by-and-by—not now.

O sir, you seem to have a heart; if you

Had seen us that wild morning when we found

Her bed unslept in, storm and shower lashing

Her casement, her poor spaniel wailing for her,

That desolate letter, blotted with her tears,

Which told us we should never see her more—

Our old nurse crying as if for her own child,

My father stricken with his first paralysis,

And then with blindness—had you been one of us

And seen all this, then you would know it is not

So easy to forgive—even the dead.

Harold. But sure am I that of your gentleness

You will forgive him. She, you mourn for, seem'd

A miracle of gentleness—would not blur

A moth's wing by the touching; would not crush

The fly that drew her blood; and, were she living,

Would not—if penitent—have denied him her

Forgiveness. And perhaps the man himself,

When hearing of that piteous death, has suffer'd

More than we know. But wherefore waste your heart

In looking on a chill and changeless Past?

Iron will fuse, and marble melt; the Past

Remains the Past. But you are young, and—pardon me—

As lovely as your sister. Who can tell

What golden hours, with what full hands, may be

Waiting you in the distance? Might I call

Upon your father—I have seen the world—

And cheer his blindness with a traveller's tales?

Dora. Call if you will, and when you will. I cannot

Well answer for my father; but if you

Can tell me anything of our sweet Eva

When in her brighter girlhood, I at least

Will bid you welcome, and will listen to you.

Now I must go.

Harold. But give me first your hand:

I do not dare, like an old friend, to shake it.

I kiss it as a prelude to that privilege When you shall know me better.

Dora. (Aside.) How beautiful His manners are, and how unlike the farmer's!

You are staying here?

Harold. Yes, at the wayside inn Close by that alder-island in your brook,

'The Angler's Home.'

Dora. Are you one?

Harold. No, but I Take some delight in sketching, and the country

Has many charms, altho' the inhabitants

Seem semi-barbarous.

Dora. I am glad it pleases you; Yet I, born here, not only love the country,

But its inhabitants too; and you, I doubt not,

Would take to them as kindly, if you cared

To live some time among them.

Harold. If I did, Then one at least of its inhabitants Might have more charm for me than all the country.

Dora. That one, then, should be grateful for your preference.

Harold. I cannot tell, tho' standing in her presence.

(Aside.) She colors!

Dora. Sir!

Harold. Be not afraid of me, For these are no conventional flourishes.

I do most earnestly assure you that Your likeness—

(Shouts and cries without.)

Dora. What was that? my poor blind father—

Enter FARMING MAN.

Farming Man. Miss Dora, Dan Smith's cart hes runned ower a laädy

i' the holler laäne, and they ha' ta'en the body up inter your chaumber, and they be all a-callin' for ye.

Dora. The body!—Heavens! I come!

Harold. But you are trembling. Allow me to go with you to the farm. *(Exeunt.)*

Enter DOBSON.

Dobson. What feller wur it as' a' been a-talkin' fur haäfe an hour wi' my Dora? *(Looking after him.)* Secäms I ommost knaws the back on 'im—drest like a gentleman, too. Damn all gentlemen, says I! I should ha' thowt they'd hed anew o' gentle-föälk, as I telled 'er to-daäy when she fell foul upo' me.

Minds ma o' summun. I could sweär to that; but that be all one, fur I haätes 'im afoor I knaws what 'e be. Theer! he turns round. Philip Hedgar o' Soomerset! Philip Hedgar o' Soomerset!—Noä—yeas—thaw the feller's gone and maäde such a litter of his faäce.

Eh lad, if it be thou, I'll Philip tha! a-plaäyin' the 'saäme gaäme wi' my Dora—I'll Soomerset tha.

I'd like to drag 'im thruff the herse-pond, and she to be a-lookin' at it. I'd like to leather 'im black and blue, and she to be a-laughin' at it. I'd like to fell 'im as deäde as a bullock! *(Clenching his fist.)*

But what 'ud she saäy to that? She telled me once not to meddle wi' 'im, and now she be fallen out wi' ma, and I can't coom at 'er.

It mun be him. Noä! Fur she'd niver 'a been talkin' haäfe an hour wi' the divil 'at killed her oän sister, or she beänt Dora Steer.

Yeas! Fur she niver knawed 'is faäce when 'e wur 'ere afoor; but I'll maäke 'er knaw! I'll maäke 'er knaw!

Enter HAROLD.

* Naäy, but I mun git out on 'is

waay now, or I shall be the death on im. *[Exit.]*

Harold. How the clown glared at me! that Dobbins, is it, With whom I used to jar? but can he trace me Thro' five years' absence, and my change of name, The tan of southern summers and the beard? I may as well avoid him.

Ladylike!
Lilylike in her stateliness and sweetness!

How came she by it?—a daughter of the fields,

This Dora!

She gave her hand, unask'd, at the farm-gate;

I almost think she half return'd the pressure

Of mine. What, I that held the orange blossom

Dark as the yew? but may not those, who march

Before their age, turn back at times, and make

Courtesy to custom? and now the stronger motive,

Misnamed free-will—the crowd would call it conscience—

Moves me—to what? I am dreaming; for the past

Look'd thro' the present, Eva's eyes thro' hers—

A spell upon me! Surely I loved Eva

More than I knew! or is it but the past

That brightens in retiring? Oh, last night

Tired, pacing my new lands at Littlechester,

I dozed upon the bridge, and the black river

Flow'd thro' my dreams—if dreams they were. She rose

From the foul flood and pointed toward the farm,

And her cry rang to me across the years.

'I call you, Philip Edgar, Philip Edgar!

Come, you will set all right again, and father

Will not die miserable.' I could make his age

A comfort to him—so be more at peace

With mine own self. Some of my former friends

Would find my logic faulty; let them. Color

Flows thro' my life again, and I have lighted

On a new pleasure. Anyhow we must

Move in the line of least resistance when

The stronger motive rules.

But she hates Edgar.

May not this Dobbins, or some other spy

Edgar in Harold? Well then, I must make her

Love Harold first, and then she will forgive

Edgar for Harold's sake. She said herself

She would forgive him, by-and-by, not now—

For her own sake *then*, if not for mine —not now—

But by-and-by.

Enter DOBSON behind.

Dobson. By-and-by—eh, *Wed*, dosta know this pääper? Ye dropt it upo' the road. 'Philip Edgar, Esq.' Ay, you be a pretty squire. I ha' fun' ye out, I hev. Eh, lad, dosta know what tha meäns wi' by-and-by? Fur if ye be goin' to sarve our Dora as ye sarved our Eva—then, by-and-by, if she weänt listen to me when I be a-tryin' to saäve 'er—if she weänt—look to thysen, for, by the Lord, I'd think na moor o' maäkin' an end o' tha nor a carrion crow—noä—thaw they hanged ma at 'Size fur it.

Harold. Dobbins, I think!

Dobson. I beänt Dobbins.

Harold. Nor am I Edgar, my good fellow.

Dobson. Tha lies! What hasta been saäyin' to my Dora?

Harold. I have been telling her of the death of one Philip Edgar of Toft Hall, Somerset.

Dobson. Tha lies!

Harold (pulling out a newspaper). Well, my man, it seems that you can read. Look there—under the deaths.

Dobson. 'O' the 17th, Philip Edgar, o' Toft Hall, Soomerset.' How coom thou to be sa like 'im, then?

Harold. Naturally enough; for I am closely related to the dead man's family.

Dobson. An' ow coom thou by the letter to 'im?

Harold. Naturally again; for as I used to transact all his business for him, I had to look over his letters. Now then, see these (*takes out letters*). Half a score of them, all directed to me—Harold.

Dobson. 'Arold! 'Arold! 'Arold, so they be.

Harold. My name is Harold! Good-day, Dobbins! [*Exit.*]

Dobson. 'Arold! the feller's cleän daäzed, an' maäzed, an' maäted, an' muddled ma. Dead! It mun be true, fur it wur i' print as black as owt. Naäy, but 'Good daäy, Dobbins.' Why, that wur the very twang on 'im. Eh, lad, but whether thou be Hedgar, or Hedgar's business man, thou her 't naw business 'ere wi' my Dora, as I knaws on, an' whether thou calls thysen Hedgar or Harold, if thou stick to she I'll stick to thee—stick to tha like a weasel to a rabbit, I will. Ay! and I'd like to shoot tha like a rabbit an' all. 'Good daäy, Dobbins.' Dang tha!

ACT III.

SCENE.—A ROOM IN STEER'S HOUSE. DOOR LEADING INTO BEDROOM AT THE BACK.

Dora (ringing a handbell). Milly!

Enter MILLY.

Milly. The little 'ymn? Yeäs, Miss; but I wur so ta'en up wi' leädin' the owd man about all the blessed murnin' 'at I ha' nobbut larned mysen haäfe on it.

'O man, forgive thy mortal foe,
Nor ever strike him blow for blow;
For all the souls on earth that live
To be forgiven must forgive.
Forgive him seventy times and seven;
For all the blessed souls in Heaven
Are both forgivers and forgiven.'

But I'll git the book ageän, and larn mysen the rest, and saäy it to ye afor dark; ye ringed fur that, Miss, didn't ye?

Dora. No, Milly; but if the farming-men be come for their wäges, to send them up to me.

Milly. Yeäs, Miss. [*Exit.*]

Dora (sitting at desk counting money). Enough at any rate for the present. (*Enter Farming Men.*) Good afternoonn, my friends. I am sorry Mr. Steer still continues too unwell to attend to you, but the schoolmaster looked to the paying you your wages when I was away, didn't he?

Men. Yeäs; and thanks to ye.

Dora. Some of our workmen have left us, but he sent me an alphabetical list of those that remain, so, Allen, I may as well begin with you.

Allen (with his hand to his ear). Halfabitical! Taäke one o' the young 'uns fust, Miss, for I be a bit deaf, and I wur hallus scaäred by a big word; leästwaäys, I should be wi' a lawyer.

Dora. I spoke of your names, Allen, as they are arranged here (*shows book*)—according to their first letters.

Allen. Letters! Yeas, I sees now. Them be what they larns the childer' at school, but I were burn afnor schoolintime.

Dora. But, Allen, tho' you can't

read, you could whitewash that cottage of yours where your grandson had the fever.

Allen. I'll hev it done o' Monday.

Dora. Else if the fever spread, the parish will have to thank you for it.

Allen. Meä? why, it be the Lord's doin', noän o' mine; d'ye think I'd gi'e 'em the fever? But I thanks ye all the saäme, Miss. (*Takes money.*)

Dora (*calling out names*). Higgins, Jackson, Luscombe, Nokes, Oldham, Skipworth! (*All take money.*) Did you find that you worked at all the worse upon the cold tea than you would have done upon the beer?

Higgins. Noä, Miss; we worked naw wuss upo' the cowl tea; but we'd ha' worked better upo' the beer.

Dora. Come, come, you worked well enough, and I am much obliged to all of you. There's for you, and you, and you. Count the money and see if it's all right.

Men. All right, Miss; and thank ye kindly.

[*Exeunt* Luscombe, Nokes, Oldham, Skipworth.

Dora. Dan Smith, my father and I forgave you stealing our coals.

[*Dan Smith advances to Dora.*

Dan Smith (*bellowing*). Whoy, O lor, Miss! that wur sa long back, and the walls sa thin, and the winders brokken, and the weather sa cowl, and my missus a-gittin' ower 'er lyin'-in.

Dora. Didn't I say that we had forgiven you? But, Dan Smith, they tell me that you—and you have six children—spent all your last Saturday's wages at the ale-house; that you were stupid drunk all Sunday, and so ill in consequence all Monday, that you did not come into the hayfield. Why should I pay you your full wages?

Dan Smith. I be ready to taäke the pledge.

Dora. And as ready to break it again. Besides it was you that were driving the cart—and I fear you were tipsy then, too—when you lamed the lady in the hollow lane.

Dan Smith (*bellowing*). O lor, Miss! noä, noä, noä! Ye sees the holler laäne be hallus sa dark i' the artemnoon, and where the big eshtree cuts athurt it, it gi'es a turn like, and 'ow should I see to laäme the laädy, and meä coomin' along pretty sharp an' all?

Dora. Well, there are your wages; the next time you waste them at a pot-house you get no more from me. (*Exit Dan Smith.*) Sally Allen, you worked for Mr. Dobson, didn't you?

Sally (*advancing*). Yeäs, Miss; but he wur so rough wi' ma, I couldn't abide 'im.

Dora. Why should he be rough with you? You are as good as a man in the hayfield. What's become of your brother?

Sally. 'Listed for a soädger, Miss, i' the Queen's Real Hard Tillery.

Dora. And your sweetheart—when are you and he to be married?

Sally. At Michaelmas, Miss, please God.

Dora. You are an honest pair. I will come to your wedding.

Sally. An' I thanks ye fur that, Miss, moor nor fur the waäge.

(*Going—returns.*) 'A cotched ma about the waaist, Miss, when 'e wur 'ere afoor, an' axed ma to be' is little sweet-art, an soä I know'd 'im when I seed' im ageän and I telled feyther on 'im.

Dora. What is all this, Allen?

Allen. Why, Miss Dora, meä and my maätes, us three, we wants to hev three words wi' ye.

Higgins. That be 'im, and meä, Miss.

Jackson. An' meä, Miss.

Allen. An' we weänt mention naw naämes, we'd as lief talk o' the Devil afoor ye as 'im, fur they says the master goäs cleän off his 'eäd when he 'eärs the naäme on 'im; but us three, arter Sally'd telled us on 'im, we fun' 'im out a-walkin' i' West 'ield wi' a white 'at, nine o'clock, upo' Tuesday murnin', and all on us, wi' your leave, we wants to leather 'im.

Dora. Who?

Allen. Ifim as did the mischief here, five year' sin'.

Dora. Mr. Edgar?

Allen. Theer, Miss! You ha' naamed 'im—not me.

Dora. He's dead, man—dead; gone to his account—dead and buried.

Allen. I beänt sa sewer o' that, fur Sally knaw'd 'im; Now then?

Dora. Yes; it was in the Somersetshire papers.

Allen. Then yon mun be his brother, an' we'll leather 'im.

Dora. I never heard that he had a brother. Some foolish mistake of Sally's; but what! would you beat a man for his brother's fault? That were a wild justice indeed. Let bygones be bygones. Go home! Good-night! (*All exeunt.*) I have once more paid them all. The work of the farm will go on still, but for how long? We are almost at the bottom of the well: little more to be drawn from it—and what then? Encumbered as we are, who would lend us anything? We shall have to sell all the land, which Father, for a whole life, has been getting together, again, and that, I am sure, would be the death of him. What am I to do? Farmer Dobson, were I to marry him, has promised to keep our heads above water; and the man has doubtless a good heart, and a true and lasting love for me: yet—though I can be sorry for him—as the good Sally says, 'I can't abide him'—almost brutal, and matched with my Harold is like a hedge thistle by a garden rose. But then, he, too—will he ever be of one faith with his wife? which is my dream of a true marriage. Can I fancy him kneeling with me, and uttering the same prayer; standing up side by side with me, and singing the same hymn? I fear not. Have I done wisely, then, in accepting him? But may not a girl's love-dream have too much romance in it to be realized all at once, or altogether, or anywhere but in Heaven? And yet I had once

a vision of a pure and perfect marriage, where the man and the woman, only differing as the stronger and the weaker, should walk hand in hand together down this valley of tears, as they call it so truly, to the grave at the bottom, and lie down there together in the darkness which would seem but for a moment, to be awakened again together by the light of the resurrection, and no more partings for ever and for ever. (*Walks up and down. She sings.*)

'O happy lark, that warblest high

Above thy lowly nest,

O brook, that brawlest merrily by

Thro' fields that once were blest,

O tower spiring to the sky,

O grave in daisies drest,

O Love and Life, how weary am I,

And how I long for rest.

There, there, I am a fool! Tears! I have sometimes been moved to tears by a chapter of fine writing in a novel; but what have I to do with tears now? All depends on me—Father, this poor girl, the farm, everything; and they both love me—I am all in all to both; and he loves me too, I am quite sure of that. Courage, courage! and all will go well. (*Goes to bedroom door; opens it.*) How dark your room is! Let me bring you in here where there is still full daylight. (*Brings Eva forward.*) Why, you look better.

Eva. And I feel so much better, that I trust I may be able by-and-by to help you in the business of the farm; but I must not be known yet. Has anyone found me out, Dora?

Dora. Oh, no; you kept your veil too close for that when they carried you in, since then, no one has seen you but myself.

Eva. Yes—this Milly.

Dora. Poor blind Father's little guide, Milly, who came to us three years after you were gone, how should she know you? But now that you have been brought to us as it were from the grave, dearest Eva, and have

been here so long, will you not speak with Father to-day?

Eva. Do you think that I may? No, not yet. I am not equal to it yet.

Dora. Why? Do you still suffer from your fall in the hollow lane?

Eva. Bruised; but no bones broken.

Dora. I have always told Father that the huge old ash-tree there would cause an accident some day; but he would never cut it down, because one of the Steers had planted it there in former times.

Eva. If it had killed one of the Steers there the other day, it might have been better for her, for him, and for you.

Dora. Come, come, keep a good heart! Better for me! That's good. How better for me?

Eva. You tell me you have a lover. Will he not fly from you if he learn the story of my shame and that I am still living?

Dora. No; I am sure that when we are married he will be willing that you and Father should live with us; for, indeed, he tells me that he met you once in the old times, and was much taken with you, my dear.

Eva. Taken with me; who was he? Have you told him I am here?

Dora. No; do you wish it?

Eva. See, Dora; you yourself are ashamed of me (*sweeps*), and I do not wonder at it.

Dora. But I should wonder at myself if it were so. Have we not been all in all to one another from the time when we first peeped into the bird's nest, waded in the brook, ran after the butterflies, and prattled to each other that we would marry fine gentlemen, and played at being fine ladies?

Eva. That last was my Father's fault, poor man. And this lover of yours—this Mr. Harold—is a gentleman?

Dora. That he is, from head to foot. I do believe I lost my heart to

him the very first time we met, and I love him so much—

Eva. Poor Dora!

Dora. That I dare not tell him how much I love him.

Eva. Better not. Has he offered you marriage, this gentleman?

Dora. Could I love him else?

Eva. And are you quite sure that after marriage this gentleman will not be shamed of his poor farmer's daughter among the ladies in his drawing-room?

Dora. Shamed of me in a drawing-room! Wasn't Miss Vavasour, our schoolmistress at Littlechester, a lady born? Were not our fellow-pupils all ladies? Wasn't dear mother herself at least by one side a lady? Can't I speak like a lady; pen a letter like a lady; talk a little French like a lady; play a little like a lady? Can't a girl when she loves her husband, and he her, make herself anything he wishes her to be! Shamed of me in a drawing-room, indeed! See here! 'I hope your Lordship is quite recovered of your gout?' (*Curtseys.*) 'Will your Ladyship ride to cover to-day?' (*Curtseys.*) 'I can recommend our Voltigeur.' 'I am sorry that we could not attend your Grace's party on the 10th!' (*Curtseys.*) There, I am glad my nonsense has made you smile!

Eva. I have heard that 'your Lordship,' and 'your Ladyship,' and 'your Grace' are all growing old-fashioned!

Dora. But the love of sister for sister can never be old-fashioned. I have been unwilling to trouble you with questions, but you seem somewhat better to-day. We found a letter in your bedroom torn into bits. I couldn't make it out. What was it?

Eva. From him! from him! He said we had been most happy together, and he trusted that some time we should meet again, for he had not forgotten his promise to come when I called him. But that was a mockery, you know, for he gave me no address.

and there was no word of marriage; and, O Dora, he signed himself 'Yours gratefully'—fancy, Dora, 'gratefully'! 'Yours gratefully'!

Dora. Infamous wretch! (*Aside.*) Shall I tell her he is dead? No; she is still too feeble.

Eva. Hark! Dora, some one is coming. I cannot and will not see anybody.

Dora. It is only Milly.

Enter MILLY with basket of roses.

Dora. Well, Milly, why do you come in so roughly? This sick lady here might have been asleep.

Milly. Please, Miss, Mr. Dobson told me to say he's browt some of Miss Eva's roses for the sick lady to smell on.

Dora. Take them, dear. Say that the sick lady thanks him! Is he here?

Milly. Yeäs, Miss; and he wants to speak to ye partic'lar.

Dora. Tell him I cannot leave the sick lady just yet.

Milly. Yeäs, Miss; but he says he wants to tell ye summut very partic'lar.

Dora. 'Not to-day. What are you staying for?

Milly. Why, Miss, I be afeard I shall set him a-sweäring like onythink.

Dora. And what harm will that do you, so that you do not copy his bad manners? Go, child. (*Exit Milly.*) But, Eva, why did you write 'Seek me at the bottom of the river'?

Eva. Why? because I meant it!—that dreadful night! that lonely walk to Littlechester, the rain beating in my face all the way, dead midnight when I came upon the bridge; the river, black, slimy, swirling under me in the lamplight, by the rotten wharfs—but I was so mad, that I mounted upon the parapet—

Dora. You make me shudder!

Eva. To fling myself over, when I heard a voice, 'Girl, what are you doing there?' It was a Sister of Mercy, come from the death-bed of a pauper,

who had died in his misery blessing God, and the Sister took me to her house, and bit by bit—for she promised secrecy—I told her all.

Dora. And what then?

Eva. She would have persuaded me to come back here, but I couldn't. Then she got me a place as nursery governess, and when the children grew too old for me, and I asked her once more to help me, once more she said, 'Go home;' but I hadn't the heart or face to do it. And then—what would Father say? I sank so low that I went into service—the drudge of a lodging-house—and when the mistress died, and I appealed to the Sister again, her answer—I think I have it about me—yes, there it is!

Dora (reads). 'My dear Child,—I can do no more for you. I have done wrong in keeping your secret; your Father must be now in extreme old age. Go back to him and ask his forgiveness before he dies.—SISTER AGATHA.' Sister Agatha is right. Don't you long for Father's forgiveness!

Eva. I would almost die to have it!

Dora. And he may die before he gives it; may drop off any day, any hour. You must see him at once. (*Rings bell. Enter Milly.*) Milly, my dear, how did you leave Mr. Steer?

Milly. He's been a-moänin' and a-groänin' in 'is sleep, but I thinks he be wakkenin' oop.

Dora. Tell him that I and the lady here wish to see him. You see she is lamed, and cannot go down to him.

Milly. Yeäs, Miss, I will.

[*Exit Milly.*]

Dora. I ought to prepare you. You must not expect to find our Father as he was five years ago. He is much altered; but I trust that your return—for you know, my dear, you were always his favorite—will give him, as they say, a new lease of life.

Eva (clinging to Dora). Oh, Dora, Dora!

Enter STEER led by MILLY.

Steer. Hes the cow cawved?

Dora. No, Father.

Steer. Be the colt dead?

Dora. No, Father.

Steer. He wur sa bellows'd out wi' the wind this murnin', 'at I tell'd 'em to gallop 'im. Be he dead?

Dora. Not that I know.

Steer. What hasta sent fur me, then, fur?

Dora (taking Steer's arm). Well, Father, I have a surprise for you.

Steer. I ha niver been surprised but once i' my life, and I went blind upon it.

Dora. Eva has come home.

Steer. Hoām? fro' the bottom o' the river?

Dora. No, Father, that was a mistake. She's here again.

Steer. The Steers was all gentle-foälks i' the owd times, an' I worked early an' laäte to maäke 'em all gentlefoälks ageän. The land belonged to the Steers i' the owd times, an' it belongs to the Steers ageän: I bowt it back ageän; but I couldn't buy my darter back ageän when she lost hersen, could I? I eddicated boäth on 'em to marry gentlemen, an' one on 'em went an' lost hersen i' the river.

Dora. No, Father, she's here.

Steer. Here! she moänt coom here. What would her mother saäy? If it be her ghoäst, we mun abide it. We can't keep a ghoäst out.

Eva (falling at his feet). O forgive me! forgive me!

Steer. Who said that? Taäke me awaäy, little gell. It be one o' my bad daäys. [*Exit Steer led by Milly.*]

Dora (smoothing Eva's forehead). Be not so cast down, my sweet Eva. You heard him say it was one of his bad days. He will be sure to know you to-morrow.

Eva. It is almost the last of my bad days, I think. I am very faint. I must lie down. Give me your arm. Lead me back again.

[*Dora takes Eva into inner room.*]

Enter MILLY.

Milly. Miss Dora! Miss Dora!

Dora (returning and leaving the bedroom door ajar). Quiet! quiet! What is it?

Milly. Mr. 'Aroid, Miss.

Dora. Below?

Milly. Yeäs, Miss. He be saäyin' a word to the owd man, but he'll coom up if ye lets 'im.

Dora. Tell him, then, that I'm waiting for him.

Milly. Yeäs, Miss.

[*Exit. Dora sits pensively and waits.*]

Enter HAROLD.

Harold. You are pale, my Dora! but the ruddiest cheek

That ever charm'd the plowman of your wolds

Might wish its rose a lily, could it look

But half as lovely. I was speaking with

Your father, asking his consent—you wish'd me—

That we should marry: he would answer nothing,

I could make nothing of him; but, my flower,

You look so weary and so worn! What is it

Has put you out of heart?

Dora. It puts me in heart Again to see you; but indeed the state

Of my poor father puts me out of heart.

Is yours yet living?

Harold. No—I told you.

Dora. When?

Harold. Confusion!—Ah well,

well! the state we all

Must come to in our spring-and-winter world

If we live long enough! and poor Steer looks

The very type of Age in a picture, bow'd

To the earth he came from, to the grave he goes to,

Beneath the burthen of years.

Dora. More like the picture
Of Christian in my 'Pilgrim's Progress' here,
Bow'd to the dust beneath the burthen
of sin.

Harold. Sin! What sin?

Dora. Not his own.

Harold. That nursery-tale
Still read, then?

Dora. Yes; our carters and our
shepherds
Still find a comfort there.

Harold. Carters and shepherds!

Dora. Scorn! I hate scorn. A
soul with no religion—

My mother used to say that such a
one

Was without rudder, anchor, compass
—might be

Blown every way with every gust and
wreck

On any rock; and tho' you are good
and gentle,

Yet if thro' any want—

Harold. Of this religion?
Child, read a little history, you will
find

The common brotherhood of man has
been

Wrong'd by the cruelties of his religions

More than could ever have happen'd
thro' the want

Of any or all of them.

Dora. —But, O dear friend,
If thro' the want of any—I mean the
true one—

And pardon me for saying it—you
should ever

Be tempted into doing what might
seem

Not altogether worthy of you, I think
That I should break my heart, for you
have taught me

To love you.

Harold. What is this? some one
been stirring

Against me? he, your rustic amouirist,
The polish'd Damon of your pastoral
here,

This Dobson of your idyll?

Dora. No, Sir, no!

Did you not tell me he was crazed
with jealousy,
Had threaten'd ev'n your life, and
would say anything?

Did I not promise not to listen to
him,

Nor ev'n to see the man?

Harold. Good; then what is it
That makes you talk so dolefully?

Dora. I told you—
My father. Well, indeed, a friend

just now,
One that has been much wrong'd,
whose griefs are mine,

Was warning me that if a gentleman
Should wed a farmer's daughter, he
would be

Sooner or later shamed of her among
The ladies, born his equals.

Harold. More fool he!
What I that have been call'd a

Socialist,
A Communist, a Nihilist—what you
will!—

Dora. What are all these?

Harold. Utopian idiotcies.
They did not last three Junes. Such

rampant weeds
Strangle each other, die, and make
the soil

For Cæsars, Cromwells, and Napo-
leons

To root their power in. I have freed
myself

From all such dreams, and some will
say because

I have inherited my Uncle. Let
them.

But—shamed of you, my Empress! I
should prize

The pearl of Beauty, even if I found
it

Dark with the soot of slums.

Dora. But I can tell you,
We Steers are of old blood, tho' we

be fallen.

See there our shield. (Pointing to
arms on mantelpiece.)

For I have heard the Steers
Had land in Saxon times; and your

own name
Of Harold sounds so English and so

old

I am sure you must be proud of it.

Harold. Not I!
As yet I scarcely feel it mine. I took it

For some three thousand acres. I have land now
And wealth, and lay both at your feet.

Dora. And what was Your name before?

Harold. Come, come, my girl, enough

Of this strange talk. I love you and you me.

True, I have held opinions, hold some still,

Which you would scarce approve of: for all that,

I am a man not prone to jealousies, Caprices, humors, moods; but very ready

To make allowances, and mighty slow To feel offences. Nay, I do believe

I could forgive—well, almost anything—

And that more freely than your formal priest,

Because I know more fully than *he* can

What poor earthworms are all and each of us,

Here crawling in this boundless Nature. *Dora,*

If marriage ever brought a woman happiness

I doubt not I can make you happy.

Dora. You make me Happy already.

Harold. And I never said As much before to any woman living.

Dora. No?

Harold. No! by this true kiss, you are the first

I ever have loved truly.

[*They kiss each other.*
Eva (with a wild cry). Philip

Edgar!

Harold. The phantom cry! You

—did you hear a cry?

Dora. She must be crying out

'Edgar' in her sleep.

Harold. Who must be crying out 'Edgar' in her sleep.

Dora. Your pardon for a minute.

She must be waked.

Harold. Who must be waked?

Dora. I am not deaf: you fright

me.

What ails you?

Harold. Speak.

Dora. You know her, *Eva.*

Harold. *Eva!*

[*Eva opens the door and stands in the entry.*

She!

Eva. Make her happy, then, and I forgive you. [*Falls dead.*

Dora. Happy! What? *Edgar?*

Is it so? Can it be?

They told me so. Yes, yes! I see it

all now.

O she has fainted. Sister, *Eva,* sister!

He is yours again—he will love you

again;

I give him back to you again. Look

up!

One word, or do but smile! Sweet,

do you hear me?

[*Puts her hand on Eva's heart.*

There, there—the heart, O God!—the

poor young heart

Broken at last—all still—and nothing left

To live for.

[*Falls on the body of her sister.*

Harold. Living . . . dead . . .

She said 'all still.

Nothing to live for.'

She—she knows me—now . . .

(*A pause.*)

She knew me from the first, she juggled with me,

She hid this sister, told me she was

dead—

I have wasted pity on her—not dead

now—

No! acting, playing on me, both of

them.

They drag the river for her! no, not

they!

Playing on me—not dead now—a

swoon—a scene—

Yet—how she made her wail as for

the dead!

Enter MILLY.

Milly. Please, Mister 'Arold.
Harold (roughly). Well?
 Milly. The owd man's coom'd
 ageän to 'issen, an' wants
 To hev a word wi' ye about the mar-
 riage.

Harold. The what?

Milly. The marriage.

Harold. The marriage?

Milly. Yeäs, the marriage.
 Granny says marriages be maäde i'
 'eaven.

Harold. She lies! They are made
 in Hell. Child, can't you see?
 Tell them to fly for a doctor.

Milly. O law—yeäs, Sir!
 I'll run for 'im mysen. *[Exit.]*

Harold. All silent there,
 Yes, deathlike! Dead? I dare not
 look: if dead,
 Were it best to steal away, to spare
 myself,
 And her too, pain, pain, pain?

My curse on all
 This world of mud, on all its idiot
 gleams
 Of pleasure, all the foul fatalities
 That blast our natural passions into
 pains!

Enter DOBSON.

Dobson. You, Master Hedgar,
 Harold, or whatever
 They calls ye, for I warrants that ye
 goäs
 By haäfe a scoor o' näimes—out o'
 the chaumber.

[Dragging him past the body.]

Harold. Not that way, man!
 Curse on your brutal strength!
 I cannot pass that way.

Dobson. Out o' the chaumber!
 I'll mash tha into nowt.

Harold. The mere wild-beast!

Dobson. Out o' the chaumber,
 dang tha!

Harold. Lout, churl, clown!

[While they are shouting and struggling Dora rises and comes between them.]

Dora (to Dobson). Peace, let him
 be: it is the chamber of Death!
 Sir, you are tenfold more a gentleman,
 A hundred times more worth a
 woman's love,
 Than this, this—but I waste no words
 upon him:
 His wickedness is like my wretched-
 ness—

Beyond all language.

(To Harold.)

You—you see her there!
 Only fifteen when first you came on
 her,

And then the sweetest flower of all
 the wolds,

So lovely in the promise of her May,
 So winsome in her grace and gaiety,
 So loved by all the village people
 here,

So happy in herself and in her
 home—

Dobson (agitated). Theer, theer!
 ha' done. I can't abear to see
 her. *[Exit.]*

Dora. A child, and all as trustful
 as a child!

Five years of shame and suffering
 broke the heart

That only beat for you; and he, the
 father,

Thro' that dishonor which you
 brought upon us,

Has lost his health, his eyesight, even
 his mind.

Harold (covering his face). Enough!

Dora. It seem'd so; only there
 was left

A second daughter, and to her you
 came

Veiling one sin to act another.

Harold. No!

You wrong me there! hear, hear me!
 I wish'd, if you— *[Pauses.]*

Dora. If I—

Harold. Could love me, could be
 brought to love me

As I loved you—

Dora. What then?

Harold. I wish'd, I hoped
 To make, to make—

Dora. What did you hope to
 make?

Harold. 'Twere best to make an
end of my lost life.

O Dora, Dora!

Dora. What did you hope to
make?

Harold. Make, make! I cannot
find the word—forgive it—

Amends.

Dora. For what? to whom?

Harold. To him, to you!

Dora. To him! to me!
[*Falling at her feet.*

No, not with all your wealth,
Your land, your life! Out in the
fiercest storm

That ever made earth tremble—he,
nor I—

The shelter of *your* roof—not for one
moment—

Nothing from *you*!

Sunk in the deepest pit of pauperism,
Push'd from all doors as if we bore
the plague,

Smitten with fever in the open field,
Laid famine-stricken at the gates of
Death—

Nothing from you!

But she there—her last word
Forgave—and I forgive you. If you
ever

Forgive yourself, you are even lower
and baser

Than even I can well believe you. Go!
[*He lies at her feet. Curtain falls.*

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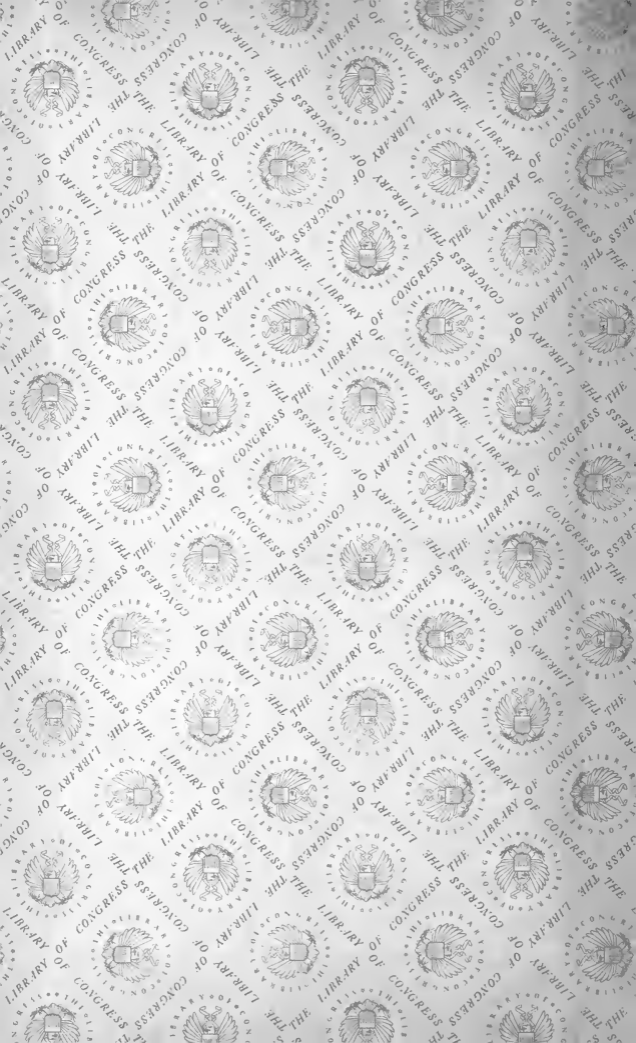
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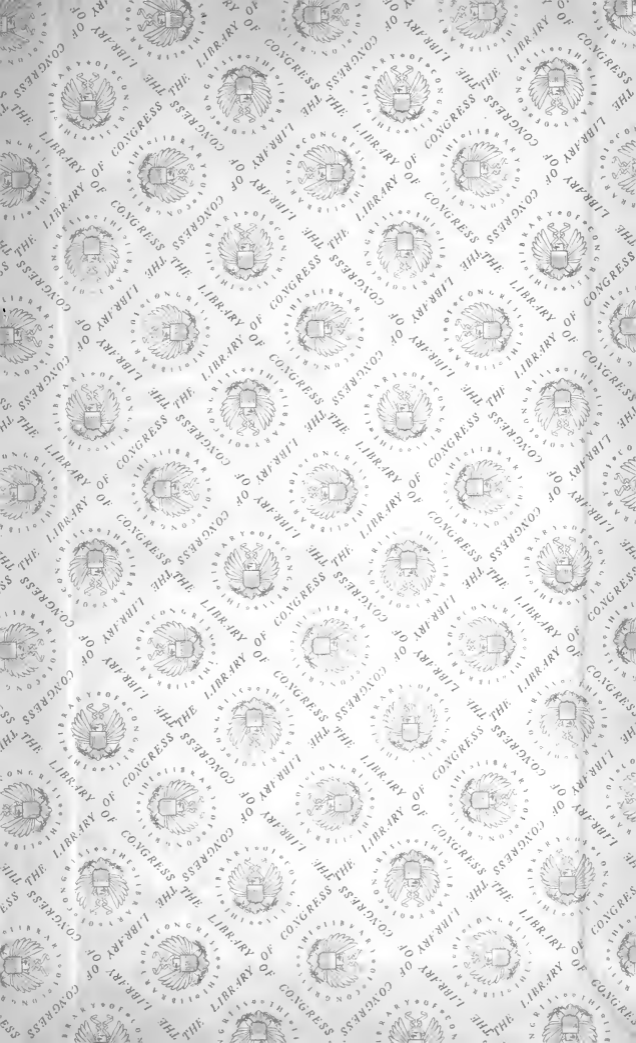
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